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# **Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Historia**

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**COSMIN CĂTĂLIN RUSU**

*Researching Everyday Life in the Main Urban Centres of Late Medieval Transylvania. The Model of Transylvanian Cities of German Foundation and Tradition. II. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives*

3

**MIHA PREINFALK**

*Corelations between social and national mobility in Carniola*

29

**SORIN MITU**

*Mutual Images of Romanians and Hungarians in Proverbs Collected in the Nineteenth Century*

57

**CRISTIAN PLOSCARU**

*The Institution of the Prefecture in Romania (1864–1892): Between social relations of patronage and political networks*

75

**IOAN BOLOVAN, FLOAREA POP**

*The Origins of Avram Iancu's High Brow "Heroization": Iosif Vulcan and the Journal "Familia" (1867–1872)*

91

**MIRCEA-CRISTIAN GHENGHEA**

*Journalist, spy, propagandist: about Vándory Lajos and his activity in Romania (1876–1885)*

105

**Lucian TURCU**

*The Interest of the Convert: Marius Theodorian-Carada and the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in the First Decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

123

**JUDIT PÁL**

*Changes in the Recruitment of Transylvanian Local Government Representatives (Lord Lieutenants and Prefects) During and After the First World War*

141

**MARIA TĂTAR-DAN**

*Culture, Travels and National Identity in Transylvania in the Aftermath of the Great War*

161

**ANDREI FLORIN SORA**

*Savel Rădulescu – Member of the Titulescu Team and Expert in the Optants Question*

183



# Researching Everyday Life in the Main Urban Centres of Late Medieval Transylvania. The Model of Transylvanian Cities of German Foundation and Tradition.

## II. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** A theoretical-methodological reflection must be situated at the beginning of any historical approach, with the aim of individualizing the discipline of the history of everyday (medieval) life and differentiating it as an independent branch of research.\* The most important aspects of the investigation consist in: a) formulating clear questions and b) defining the goals of knowledge/understanding, to eliminate the risk of ending up with a simple collection of anecdotes – which, while undeniably captivating, cannot be considered science, and, consequently, becomes part of literature. In its elementary form, daily life is a simple manipulation of certain constants – the environment, people and things, understood through the daily repetition of certain activities, which become habits and are then performed mechanically. It is often stated that the history of everyday life does not have its own method, and it follows the analysis grids of history, more precisely of its auxiliary disciplines. Moreover, the history of everyday life remains dependent on the help of other sciences. In this context, the research is interdisciplinary, involving most of the auxiliary or frontier sciences of history: history of law, archaeology, literature and philology, music and art history, historical geography and ethnography, etc.

Research schedule and analysis grid. Based on the historiographic documentation, the theoretical-methodological excursion and the identification of the potential and the limits of the available sources, the

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<sup>1</sup> „The first part of this paper was published under the title: Cosmin Cătălin Rusu, „Cercetarea vieţii cotidiene în principalele centre urbane ale Transilvaniei medievale târzii. Modelul oraşelor ardeleni de fundaţie şi tradiţie germană. I. Repere şi contexte istoriografice,” in *Pasiune şi Rigoare. Noi tentaţii istoriografice. Omagiu profesorului Ovidiu Ghitta, Ionuţ Costea, Radu Mârza, Valentin Orga* (eds.) (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, Mega, 2022), 698-716.”

perspective that this study proposes is that of a research program dedicated to the reconstruction of the history of everyday life in the late medieval Transylvanian urban centres. The proposed approach is organized into three distinct sections: a) that of the recomposing of frames and the dynamics of daily urban life; b) that of revealing the fundamental structures of everyday life in cities and c) that of identifying the challenges and solutions assumed by the day-to-day existence of individuals, groups and the urban community.

\*The chosen methodological model has been adopted and modified according to the analysis-interpretation grid proposed by Gerhard Jaritz, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit. Einführung in die Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Wien, Graz, Köln: Böhlau 1989), 15-26.

**Keywords:** History of Everyday Life, Urban History, Transylvanian Saxons, Late Medieval and Premodern Archaeology and Material Culture, Late Medieval and Premodern Transylvania

**Abstract:** Reflexia teoretic-metodologică trebuie să stea la începutul oricărui demers istoric, având ca scop individualizarea disciplinei istoriei vieții cotidiene (medievale) și delimitarea acesteia ca ramură independentă a cercetării.\* Cele mai importante aspecte ale investigației constau în: a) formularea de întrebări clare și b) definirea scopurilor cunoașterii/înțelegerii, pentru eliminarea riscului de a realiza o simplă culegere de anecdote – care poate fi foarte interesantă, însă nu mai poate fi apreciată drept știință, ci devine literatură. În forma sa elementară, viața cotidiană este o simplă manipulare a unor constante – mediu înconjurător, oameni și lucruri, înțelese prin repetarea zilnică a unor activități, care devin obișnuință și sunt îndeplinite apoi mecanic. Se afirmă adeseori că istoria vieții cotidiene nu are o metodă proprie, urmând grilele de analiză ale istoriei, respectiv ale disciplinelor auxiliare acesteia. De asemenea, istoria vieții cotidiene rămâne obligată ajutorului altor științe. În acest context, cercetarea este una interdisciplinară, implicând majoritatea științelor auxiliare sau de frontieră ale istoriei: istoria dreptului, arheologia, literatura și filologia, muzica și istoria artei, geografia istorică și etnografia, etc.

Programul de cercetare și grila de analiză. În baza documentării istoriografice, a excursului teoretic-metodologic și a identificării potențialului și a limitelor surselor disponibile, perspectiva pe care acest studiu îl propune este aceea a unui program de cercetare dedicat reconstituirii istoriei vieții cotidiene în centrele urbane ale Transilvaniei medievale târzii într-o abordare structural-tripartită: a) cea a recompunerii cadrelor și a dinamicii vieții cotidiene urbane; b) cea a relevării structurilor fundamentale ale vieții de zi cu zi din

orașe și c) cea a identificării provocărilor și soluțiilor presupuse de existența de zi cu zi a indivizilor, grupurilor și comunității urbane.

\*Modelul metodologic avut în vedere este preluat și adaptat după grila de analiză-interpretare propusă de către Gerhard Jaritz, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit. Einführung in die Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Wien, Graz, Köln: Böhlau 1989), 15-26.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** istoria vieții cotidiene, istorie urbană, sași ardeleni, arheologie și cultură materială medievală târzie și premodernă, Transilvania medievală târzie și premodernă

The historical reconstruction of everyday life (German *Alltagsleben*, French *vie quotidienne*, Italian *vita quotidiana*) represents a clearly delimited research compartment of historical writing that has, over the last five decades, gained a well-defined historiographical tradition. The field opens a highly diverse thematic landscape. Its valences and potential have continuously offered researchers exciting opportunities for investigation and analysis.<sup>2</sup> Towards the end of the 1970s, the history of everyday life started to take shape as a new field of study, one that some scholars deemed to be “a new social history”. The concept of “everyday life” was used by 19<sup>th</sup> century philosophers to denote the sum of repetitive human activities. The very same concept was adopted and adapted by the new field of study. Over time, the new direction taken by historical investigation has identified its own topics of interest and specific concepts and has managed to offer a series of methodological benchmarks, doubled by a pronounced interdisciplinary character.

A first methodological question concerns whether or not the simple dissociation between the time of everyday life and the time of celebration would be enough. If the answer is positive, then when, how and by what does the celebration begin? If what is repeated daily (an eventless routine) is everyday life, what outlines the occurrences that are merely annual or that take place with other regular frequencies? The definition is not and will never be universally applicable. Each attempt at conceptual delimitation can only cover the specific case to which it refers.

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<sup>2</sup> To outline an overview of the historiography of the subject, consult the bibliographies of the volumes Robert Delort, *La vie au Moyen Age* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1982); Hans-Werner Goetz, *Life in the Middle Ages. From the Seventh to the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993); *Alltag im Spätmittelalter* Hrsg. von Harry Kühnel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986) and the work of the Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in Krems an der Donau/Austria (<https://www.imareal.sbg.ac.at>).

Furthermore, oftentimes, the new notions and phrases introduced into the theory only complicated the perceptions and possible conclusions. Some authors tried to limit the investigation only to the private-domestic field. The generic meaning of the everyday life, however, defines the conventionally (and subjectively) constituted concepts that mark the sum of all experiences that reflect the reality of the knowledge/consciousness of an individual and/or of communities, necessarily dependent on the constant of repetitiveness.

In this context, what can be understood by “everyday life”? Scholars from a wide array of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, social history or ethnography have successively or complementarily endeavoured to address this question. However, an unanimously accepted definition has not been outlined and it is likely unachievable. The history of everyday life is a discipline that is continuously being rewritten, as new elements (variables) appear constantly, while the “already known” aspects (constants) continuously receive new interpretations. The field is therefore neither a clearly defined, nor a definable one, this being perhaps the most fertile ground where ethnography/ethnology intersects popular culture (daily life is not limited to “the people”, and culture means more than merely daily life!), and material culture becomes complementary to the history of culture.

The concepts of “everyday life”, “life” or “culture of things/objects” are often used in parallel, with no clear distinction between their meanings. The first people interested in these notions were the philosophers and sociologists. They offered a present-past relational perspective in the interpretation of the concepts, but failed to delineate the unitary views in what these are concerned. In a pioneering study, N. Elias presented the fact that the notion of “everyday life” is not only completely devoid of unity/uniformity, but is used more as a counter-concept(!) to its own definition: “everyday life” in contrast to the time of the celebration; “routine” in opposition to the extraordinary in the life of the communities; “labour” (the world of the labourer) different from the everyday profitable activities of the townspeople, or their free time; the “life” of the masses other than that of the elites; “frameworks of everyday life” in relation to major (political, social, religious) events; “private life” at the opposite end of the public-profit one (the workplace). Given that the multivalence of the concepts is an obvious one, it is practically impossible to outline a universally valid definition of “everyday life”, which would integrate all the elements and aspects assumed by the valences of the main notion. Each researcher thus has the freedom and, at the same time, the duty to reflect on their own interpretation of the notion



of “everyday life”, which, by choice, may not be consistently adhered to. Delimited by N. Elias by what it is not, respectively by what belongs to the “non-daily life”, the daily life consists of routines and communication, which incorporate the natural and socio-cultural contexts: the environment, climate, language, spirituality, religion, etc. Thus, if we identify and superimpose the notion of “everyday life” with that of “human life”, the term “everyday life” becomes a tautology(!). However, the negative definition of everyday life with the help of counter-concepts appears unsatisfactory, given that it covers only part of the meanings of the term. However, any attempt at a positive definition is inevitably limited, due to its multitude of possible perspectives.<sup>3</sup>

If we were to start from the German term that defines the everyday (*Alltag*), this can be explained in its proper sense: *All* = a whole, a permanent-repeatable and general-traditional totality (the days that are similar) and *Tag* = time, measurable and estimated/evaluated on the one hand by humans, and, on the other hand, “regulated” by nature (the setting and rising of the Sun, the heat, the opposition of night, respectively the sleep and rest of humans, the movement of the Earth/its rotation around the Sun, the increase and decrease in the length of days, the seasons, time and space, the environment (*Umwelt*), the living environment (*Lebenswelt*), etc.). Put together, the WHOLE and the TIME reflect the unity found in everyday life, between natural phenomena and human action. In essence, it concerns the relationships between biological “beings” – unfolded over the course of days (in a natural space and time), and those between man and non-human factors (which man accepts or changes), respectively. In G. Jaritz’s view, “the connections of everyday life” presuppose the delimitation of at least four realities/determinants that interact multivalently: THE MAN (with their specificities of sex, groups/communities, age, etc.) - THE OBJECT (the multivalent relationship between man and object) - THE SITUATION (the stance towards the multivalent relationship between man and object) - THE QUALITY (shape, colour, material, size, value, function, number). Thus, the analysis of everyday life becomes possible when based on communication and inter-relationship. As the human being is found permanently within a context (in a certain situation), each person has their own daily life. Therefore, the analysis must be one of several, individual and different realities.<sup>4</sup> Everyday existence is therefore

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<sup>3</sup> Norbert Elias, “Zum Begriff des Alltags,” in *Materialien zur Soziologie des Alltags*, Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Sonderheft 20, Kurt Hammerich, Michael Klein eds. (Opladen: Westdt. Verl. 1978), 22-29.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Jaritz, “Mittelalterliche Realienkunde: Quellenbefund und Quelleninterpretation,” in

composed of an unlimited number of individual “daily realities”. Every man has their own daily life, never identical to that of another, and independent of their position in society. According to this theory, the fundamental premise from which one must start is that every private life and every personal circle of life is original and unrepeatable. However, to be able to attempt making any historically valuable reconstructions, it is necessary to transcend what constitutes the particular/special (and the individual!). This involves the identification of certain general frameworks and knowing/recognizing repeatable behaviours/attitudes. At the same time, the history of everyday life should not be exclusively assimilated with a history of “those from the lower classes” or with a history of “those lacking power/influence”, despite the fact that this has been the practice in scholarly literature so far, to different extents. However, we must note that the objective of the history of everyday life is conduct meticulous and effective investigations. Such approaches must include the “lower” social categories. These categories have been intentionally or unintentionally overlooked in other history-related research fields, and, as such, they received little to no scientific attention.<sup>5</sup>

**What is the research object of the history of medieval everyday life?** Essentially, medieval life, in its fundamental expressions, addresses issues that are seemingly rather straightforward: how individuals and communities dressed, where they sheltered and how they kept warm, how they ate and how they drank, why and how they worked, what they thought and what they prayed for, how they lived/cohabited day by day. An entire context of thematic-structural regroupings and intersections can lead to the reconstitution of “medieval daily cultural behaviour.” This subject requires the documentation and interpretation process to not overlook criteria such as necessity, need, adequacy, reference to norms, value and valorisation, public character and intensity, representativeness and prestige. Only their integration allows for an intelligible ordered structure. Also, the historical conception of everyday life, as a construct subsumed by historical science, must be explained and understood in an evolutionary sense. Thus, the history of medieval daily life is (also) the

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*Die Erforschung von Alltag und Sachkultur des Mittelalters. Methode - Ziel - Verwirklichung* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), 36.

<sup>5</sup> The presentation of theoretical approaches regarding the history of medieval everyday life is based on the observations and comments made by Norbert Elias, “Zum Begriff des Alltags,” *passim*; Peter Borscheid, “Alltagsgeschichte – Modetorheit oder neues Tor zur Vergangenheit?” in Wolfgang Schieder, Volker Sellin (eds.), *Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland*, III (Göttingen, 1987), *passim* and especially Gerhard Jaritz, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit. Einführung in die Alltagsgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Wien, Graz, Cologne: Brill Österreich GmbH, 1989), *passim*.

history of the living space, the environment, the circles of existence, the domains of life, the living conditions, the forms of life, the way of life, the management/coordination of life, etc.

From the variety of possibilities and proposals regarding the definition of the content of daily life, the essential aspects include the fundamental traits of people's lives, namely the standard structures of the classical history of culture: housing, food, clothing, work, play, love, perception and valorisation of time, sociability, hygiene, family life and the course of life itself. The criterion of regularity remains rather relative, including holidays and the culminating points of existence, which are repeated in a certain rhythm. By belonging to the field of historical science, the recomposition of the frameworks of everyday life must (also) be linked to communities, not merely to isolated individuals. As a general rule, the history of everyday life reproduces a chronicle of normality, and its research object illustrates "the average man" – the one who becomes representative of a larger number of individuals. Its goal is to identify the typical within the multitude of individual destinies. The interest goes beyond both the elites/personalities, and the "lower class people", unlike the studies of the daily life of contemporary societies (but it is highlighted only exceptionally in relation to the medieval world). "Daily life" is a type of historical reconstruction which – for the Middle Ages – must include the frameworks of the existence of nobles, clerics and monks, peasants, townspeople (agricultural workers and day labourers, craftsmen and merchants, lower categories of the urban population), as well as marginal groups. To the greatest extent possible, the reconstruction must be completed with questions related to time and space, age, sex, origin-ethnicity, education, gainful activity – profession, denomination, etc.

#### **What are the classic themes of medieval everyday life research?**

The first aspect is labour (effort, striving), i.e. the mission and service of the descendants of Adam and Eve: gathering, hunting, fishing, raising animals, cultivating the land, household – kitchen activities, but also crafts – woodworking, stone working and working with bone, skin and wool, various textile plants, the production of ceramics, metal and glass. Subsumed to this, the investigation must also be interested in the house and its furnishings, in the concentration of several housing structures – built and grouped according to the organization of different jobs or having precise "functionalities" – peasant houses and urban houses, fortresses/burghs, castles and palaces, churches and parish houses, monasteries and episcopal residences, fairs and city complexes. The everyday perspective on work and adjacent social relations must assume

a global approach, integrating ownership and possession, legal hierarchies and relationships, price controls and exchange/trade regulations into the analysis.

Another major component of everyday life is the family structure – parents, husband and wife, children, young people, the elderly, as well as the entire universe of relationships generated by its daily frameworks – life by gender, love, celebration, pleasures and games, birth-marriage-death, aspects of demography, community spirit, private life, biological existence of the human body. It is well known that medieval daily life was structured almost entirely on interconnected solidarities identifiable mainly in urban environments. However, useful analogies can also be identified in the rural world, and in the seniors' environments, respectively. Every inhabitant of the city – from the powerful and rich to the simple and poor – was socially responsible, holding a small part of human dignity and implicitly the illusion/chance of equality and even power. This reality was based on the fact that the townspeople either belonged to a corporation (a guild, a brotherhood of journeymen or any other type of association/community with a secular or religious character), or were integrated into the “pyramid” of a feudal type or another hierarchies (servants, apprentices and journeymen of the guilds, craftsmen and resident nobles, urban elites and their relatives).<sup>6</sup>

The human body in turn has extensive implications for the analysis and understanding of medieval private life. The history of the naked body can be traced ichnographically from Isidore of Seville, through the late Romanesque or Gothic era, to the Renaissance. The human body can be investigated physically, biologically and psychologically. It represents the direct “object” of the action of diseases,

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the regulations regarding clothing could provide information about the senior, but also about his concentric groups – how the senior dressed, his wife, children and all those who, in one way or another, were dependent or had different connections with his person. However, the revealed data can be much more complex. They refer to a wider circle of people – friends, squires, knights, nobles, pages, clerics and laymen, warriors, and to aspects of material culture proper – the items of clothing of servants or the activity of master tailors and merchants who traded parts and clothing accessories. In this way, an image is formed which, depending on the importance of the senior (of the potentate, in general), multiplies further on towards tens, hundreds or even thousands of people. Other aspects that can and must be included in the analysis consider the clothing items functionalized as gift, compensation/retribution, reward or alms, or the social position expressed through clothing in the eyes of “public opinion”. At the same time, clothes represented a fundamental element of private life. This was the space where the pressure of fellow citizens and public life disappeared. Here, in the privacy of the house, you could make yourself “comfortable”, with your wife/girlfriend or with the family in general. Elias, “Zum Begriff des Alltags,” 56-57.

aggressions, accidents. At the same time, it is in a permanent relationship with the principles and norms of hygiene, cosmetics or vanity.<sup>7</sup> The questions related to daily existence must also aim at how the individuals of the Middle Ages used their senses or how they perceived-interpreted their sensitivities: sight reproduces shapes and colours, related to age, regions or eras; smell perception identifies natural substances, from the perspective of cosmetics and food; taste judges and classifies the sensations of sour, bitter, salty, sweet, whether it was pleasant or unpleasant, familiar or foreign; from the multitude of everyday sounds (natural and artificial), hearing also recognized and made the difference between the agreeable ones and the unbearable ones.<sup>8</sup>

Of particular importance is the relation of the human body and its perceptions with the (natural) environment and living conditions. From this perspective, the essential determinants were the physical-geographic ones: relief, climate (air temperature, winds, precipitation), soils, hydrographic regime (flowing waters, stagnant waters, underground – phreatic and deep – waters) and the biological ones: vegetation and fauna. The environmental factors that conditioned daily existence were represented by relief variations (coastal areas, meteorites, the “washing” effect of rivers) and the movement of the earth’s crust, as well as the effects of the actions of the anthropic factor. The way in which individuals related to environmental variables<sup>9</sup> (assessing/measurement of temperatures, water level, intensity of solar radiation, etc.) also had a multitude of implications for the development of everyday life: the amount of precipitation (rain, snow, drought), the blooming of the plants, the harvest, the invasions of locusts or other pests, epidemics/epizootics caused by rodents, etc. The easiest to perceive (and recompose) are the changes in the biological environment. In the era, the resource requirement of man was very strongly conditioned by the vegetation and/or by the varying predominance of wood essences (for example, conifers or deciduous trees): plants used for food/medicinal purposes or

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<sup>7</sup> For example, hairstyles, which changed according to gender, age, social class, region, ethnicity, fashion or succession of generations.

<sup>8</sup> The man of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries lived in a different environment than the man of today. The sounds and noises, the smells, the optical excitations were different, depending on the environments and structural contexts specific to the era (the “cleanliness of the streets”, the public announcements regarding ordinances and regulations, the building of toilets, the image of the sick and crippled on the streets, the general state of hygiene of a city, etc.).

<sup>9</sup> In Europe, the general climate constants were marked by a warming period between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, followed by a cooling period between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (the so-called “Little Ice Age”).

'magical' plants, plants with technical uses (for the production of clothing pieces, as a fuel material, in various crafts and in construction), but also those appreciated for their beauty and/or smell. The world of animals (vertebrates or invertebrates; wild or domesticated) was, in turn, intensely valued on a daily basis in the era. Man raised domestic animals, hunted or fished – for food or profit, for defence, and sometimes for "fun". The protein amount contained by products of animal origin considerably enriched and varied the daily diet. Depending on the area, domestic and wild birds, carp, but also herring, salmon or even snakes, cattle, sheep and goats, pigs, horses, bears, rabbits, bees, etc. were valued. In turn, the work surrounding the procurement-production-marketing of the products thus obtained becomes one of maximum relevance for medieval daily existence. In the future, special studies on the place and role of animals in everyday life will undoubtedly enhance the overall understanding and depiction of medieval everyday life. Last but not least, the study of microorganisms in the environment can bring additional information about the causes of diseases, allergies or involuntary poisoning.<sup>10</sup>

The most important element for the analysis and, implicitly, the reconstruction of medieval daily life is represented by a **rigorous criticism of the sources**. Basically, three questions are fundamental in relation to source analysis: What does the source actually mean? What does (can) it say about everyday life? What does the information revealed by it mean, from the perspective of the actual intention? Theoretically, any source or group of sources can be used to reconstruct medieval everyday life, but the history of everyday life cannot be reproduced directly from the content of the sources. On the one hand, the sources *mediate* and offer different perspectives for recomposing reality, while, on the other hand, historians *interpret* the sources in an inevitably subjective manner. This context implies a "double assumption" in relation to reality(!). Honestly, we can only talk about a "reality of the source" and not about one of "life", the reconstruction thus becoming primarily a communicative discourse. The sources of the period must be scrutinised meticulously and rigorously, given that no type of medieval historical source had ever actually been intended to document everyday life. In fact, aspects of it are very rarely and rather accidentally revealed/presented as such. Those who investigate everyday life formulate questions for which the sources do not provide direct answers. Almost without exception, there is a very large discrepancy between modern research inquiries and

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<sup>10</sup> Norbert Elias, "Zum Begriff des Alltags," 58-59.

the intention of the authors of the sources. Medieval sources about daily life offer such recounts somewhat unintentionally, given that their primary goal had initially been to portray other matters. From the perspective of the presumed intent behind these sources, the information thus gathered is almost without exception incomplete and merely offers a mosaic of snippets of everyday life. Consequently, a reliable reconstruction of the overall picture is difficult to achieve. Thus, the re-composing and explaining of a certain sequence of analysis must be certified by a corroboration of several types of sources (if possible). Also, the vast majority of sources do not primarily reproduce the reality of everyday life. It is precisely the sources that refer to everyday life – legislation, ordinances, norms, sermons, books of penance – that usually “destroy” the custom habit. They are created and disseminated for disciplinary or moral-didactic reasons – especially in literature and art – and they often depict a counter-image of everyday life. In general, tend to focus on noteworthy events or exceptional occurrences that deserve further attention or remembrance (art objects, narratives and poems, and sometimes even archaeological material – in the case of luxury artifacts).

The typology of the sources – the variety and number in which they are preserved, as well as the information contained in them – limits the frames of historical reconstruction. The type of accessible sources most often dictates the outline of the research methods, but the relationship can also be built in the opposite direction – by the prior establishment of a particular analysis grid, which leads to a selection of the categories of sources used, and to the outlining of the ways in which they are exploited, respectively. Information with an increased degree of certainty for the reconstruction of medieval daily life is mainly provided by the archaeology of the Middle Ages. Through it, soil samples and artefacts can be collected/revealed, data on the changes made to the environment, information about the arrangements and constructions of the era. However, the medieval archaeologist has more cultural-historical problems to solve than any other specialist in this field of study. The objects (artifacts preserved in the ground; architectural monuments and their representations) represent the starting point for the study of everyday life. They offer a completely new perspective on the questioning of “classical” sources: written and (icono)graphical, the latter representing sources that do not reproduce the everyday (the common), but the unique (the extraordinary), that “non-daily”, which, over time, does not repeat itself in the same manner and in the same place. Archaeological research itself must be complemented by calling onto and analysing the paedology, dendrochronology, palaeobotany, and

palaeozoology, as well as through geo-physical surveys and aerial archaeology investigations. One means of ensuring the success of different endeavours to reconstruct different segments of daily life is to employ both the raw information and its interpretation stemmed from the material culture (archaeology of the Middle Ages) and the collaboration of certain complementary fields. Thus, customs can be reconstituted by borrowing interpretation practices from ethnography, art objects by means of art history analyses, poetry and narratives by means of literary studies, and terminology by methods specific to linguistics. However, the information retrieved through means borrowed from complementary fields demands meticulous scrutiny and rigorous critique, as these fields essentially deal with their own sources, developing particular, specific research interests.

All these types of historical sources are limitless in their potential to reconstruct daily medieval life. The challenge lies in interconnecting them. The items uncovered during certain archaeological surveys must be placed in relation with both the information present in the written sources and the depictions in the iconographic sources. The descriptions and images must be subjected to an in-depth comparison with certain osteological and pollen analyses, as well as with the existing inventories that previously provided the context for the potential analogies. Because of the plurivalence of the sources, one must never overlook the fact that such approaches usually lead to inherent contradictions regarding the reconstruction of the elements of everyday life.

**The theoretical-methodological reflection** must be the starting point of any research endeavour. In the case under scrutiny, a clear outline must be drawn for the history of everyday (medieval) life as an individual field of study.<sup>11</sup> The most important aspects of the investigation consist in: a) formulating clear questions and b) defining the goals of knowledge/understanding, in order to eliminate the risk of ending up with a simple collection of anecdotes – which, while undeniably captivating, cannot be considered science, and, consequently, becomes part of literature. In its elementary form, daily life is a simple manipulation of certain constants – the environment, people and things, understood through the daily repetition of certain activities, which become habits and are then performed mechanically. It is often stated that the history of everyday life does not have its own method, and it follows the analysis grids of history, more precisely of its auxiliary disciplines.

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<sup>11</sup> The chosen methodological model has been adopted and modified according to the analysis-interpretation grid proposed by Jaritz, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit*, 15-26.



Moreover, the history of everyday life remains dependent on the help of other sciences. In this context, the research is interdisciplinary, involving most of the auxiliary or niche sciences of history: history of law, archaeology, literature and philology, music and art history, historical geography and ethnography, etc.

Practically, no methodology for the research on everyday life is set in stone – the history of everyday life is (re)composed and can offer interpretation solutions only by employing the methods of other historical fields and making the necessary comparisons. However, in order to establish the frameworks of the discipline and to conduct a structured analysis, the interpretation scheme must take into account several variables. The first aspect regards the “reality” of everyday life, which are identifiable within different types of sources: objects, inventories, accounting books, wills, etc. For example, if the list of objects and elements contained in an inventory (the “reality” of the inventory) suggests, with relative certainty, that they had been part of and had been used in the circle of existence of the person in question, it does not mean that the same objects had been designated, valued and used in the same way by others. Similarly, the scenario extends to the attributes assigned to various objects, such as a large table, a bad coat, or a heavy sword. The assumption that this type of source is exhaustive must be avoided. Likewise, the exhaustiveness criterion must be carefully administered. As a rule, an inventory does not contain all of the objects in a building, an account register does not record all transactions (and those recorded are not presented/detailed in the same way), and a will does not list all of the goods left as an inheritance. A peasant's references to his own possessions, deemed noteworthy, will invariably be more concise compared to those of an individual from the upper class or an urban resident. For people of modest social and economic-financial origins, the lists (from accounts, wills and inventories) that contain certain categories of objects or goods provide more detailed information than those regarding higher class social groups (for example, in the case of household inventories or clothing items). In these situations, research exploits the “raw material of reality” (but not reality itself): simple objects from the individual's environment. Information of this type can be very diverse, but it rarely provides details about what the objects in question look like, what ultimately happened to them, or what they were used for. Other criteria that must be taken into account are the quality and the context of the use of the “archaeological” objects: some are more resistant, some are refurbished/-able (sometimes receiving a different use), and some end up being known/used in the most diverse socio-cultural environments. The same objects and goods are valued differently by

individuals. For example, the absence of iron objects in certain archaeologically studied regions does not necessarily imply that iron was only utilized minimally in that area. The value of iron in the period was high, which led to the frequent refurbishment or recycling of objects made from this metal. Similarly, wooden, textile or ceramic objects – lower in value and easier to produce – were often abandoned when they were damaged, a situation that raises difficulties in interpreting the weight and relevance of the archaeological material.<sup>12</sup>

The “supposed” realities are those that tried to mediate “truth and reality”, through the filter of recounting one’s own experiences, of describing places and things or of presenting certain situations. These images are reproduced by different authors in the contents of letters, chronicles, diaries, travel descriptions, legal protocols, literary sources or iconographic representations. The “reality” of a biography, the description of a foreign country, an image or a poem must be viewed through the lens of the intention with which it had been made and can never truly reflect the reality of life or that of everyday life (even when the description seems strikingly precise, detailed or very plausible or when its starting point is found in real events or things). “Image reality” remains “the reality of an image” and “travel description reality” is still the “reality of a travel description.” These cannot reproduce the reality of life, given that their actual purpose was to awaken certain thoughts and feelings or to appeal to memory and tradition and not necessarily to reconstruct everyday life. Most often, these sources are used (and credited) because of the (sometimes complete) lack of other sources. A relevant analysis must identify the context for the relationship between this type of sources and other types of sources.<sup>13</sup>

Landmarks and, implicitly, documents with normative value represented one of the fundamental elements supporting the existence of the medieval world.<sup>14</sup> Relatively numerous, these regulations pertain to individuals and groups of people, states and social categories, addressing both general and specific aspects of existence, private life or work. Their goal was to create and organize the frameworks of community life – regarding the observance of customs, moral-religious aspects, the components of the social system and economic relations. They impacted virtually every aspect of everyday life (regulations regarding clothing and

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 16-18.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>14</sup> Medieval everyday life most likely meant minimal knowledge of legal norms. It was generally known what happened to thieves, robbers and criminals. Likewise, the norms regarding behaviour and urban life were also widely known (for example, guild members knew or were supposed to know their own regulations).

social behaviour, the organization and functioning of crafts, relations with the environment, etc.). The true significance of the interpretation of these norms emerges when the elements related to their dissemination, reception, compliance, and validity are effectively assimilated and processed. Their critique requires careful consideration, may incorporate elements that no longer correspond to the reality at the time of their issuance. They often encapsulate quasi-stereotypical frames developed over several generations or even centuries. It is difficult to assess with certainty whether frequently repeated elements in regulations and ordinances still find their correspondent and/or reflex in the reality of everyday life. Certain norms would not be/remain relevant for the actual situations to which they referred. Thus, what had been stated in a norm did not necessarily have to correspond to “everyday” reality. Although they provide valuable data for capturing the mentality of the era, the norms mostly reflect only individual situations, personal values, perspectives or needs of individuals, groups or communities (usually circumscribed to certain dominant categories). Along the same lines, much of the information contained in the sources regarding medieval daily life only reflects a desire and/or an ideal (as well as their correspondent: the negative reflex). Desires and ideals are obviously components of everyday life, their expressions being found in sermons, didactic-moralizing literature, but especially in images (for example, the numerous representations of interiors with the Virgin in the Nativity scene are to a greater extent in a “furniture catalogue” of the era, than in an actual everyday reality). Often the historical reconstruction tends to induce – by means of the voluntary direction of the analysis – the desired result. That is why a (hypo)thesis must be proven or rejected empirically, to the detriment of the assumptions reconfigured in the conclusions.<sup>15</sup>

The variety of study initiatives dedicated to the reconstruction of medieval daily life led to the identification of certain trends and challenges that any scholar willing to approach this field must face. Contemporary historians have often tried to project their own interests and concerns about the past (for example, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the labour movement, or around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, ecology and environmental issues) into their research on medieval everyday life. Thus, topics such as those related to labour and labourers, or nature became closer/familiar to the history of medieval daily life.<sup>16</sup> The reconstruction of medieval everyday life must be understood and described as a history that comprises broad categories of individuals,

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<sup>15</sup> Jaritz, *Zwischen Augenblick und Ewigkeit*, 19-23.

<sup>16</sup> In context, we must note that the reference systems valid today can be used in the study of the past only by addressing the questions they raise and not in terms of their meaning and valorisation.

realities that are repeated an infinite number of times (unquantifiable), general conditions (defined with as much objectivity as possible), duration and routine. Ideally, a synthesis dedicated to this topic should almost completely exclude the “picturesque detail,” as these are often present in sources due to their unique occurrence. It is practically impossible for a portrayal of universal daily life to encompass a mosaic of details or recount anecdotes, intriguing as they are. Such data tends to evoke the extraordinary, contrasting with the prevalent focus on the commonplace aspects of everyday life that often go unremarked. In its ideal version, this type of writing should be logical, should propose and develop models, build theories and use percentages and statistics.<sup>17</sup>

An overview on the recent reconstructions of the history of everyday life reveals it as fairly diverse. In the German-speaking area, interpretations predominantly centre around the study of sources or structural history. Structural history is notably characteristic of French historiography, whereas English and Swiss approaches tend to prioritize reconstructions specific to the history of culture. Although they operate with a multitude of perceptions and forms regarding everyday life, most of these models of historical reconstruction do share a number of common elements. First of all, the investigation is almost without exception descriptive. The target audience for works of this kind are is usually the general public, where they are likely to garner more interest than within the scientific community. Often, they take the form of books intended for young adults. Consequently, they have simple titles (*Daily life in...* or *Life in...*), designed to attract. With few exceptions, they are not monographic research endeavours on the history of the everyday life, but collective volumes of studies or, more frequently, syntheses that deal either with chronological segments or with the entire Middle Ages. These are general, useful works, but they most often neglect the theoretical and methodological aspects.

As its final purpose, the history of medieval everyday life must be more than a three-dimensional connection (between the subject of the past, the author and the current subject), synchronizing theory and empiricism, through micro-historical analyses (in fact, contributions to future macro-historical syntheses). The field would thus offer the possibility of new investigative perspectives, through relevant and continuously (re)updated questions on the classical endeavours in the history of culture, which would create causalities and/or involve effects, thus awakening the interest in history of laymen and beginners.

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<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the price tables, the identification of plowing cycles or the data provided by paleoclimatology, which can be easily generalized, are very useful.

**The space and chronology of the research.** The research on daily medieval urban life represents, for the specialized exegesis, one of the most promising and equally fascinating chapters of the reconstruction of the past. Given that this field of historical investigation was established as such only in the last half century, the historiography that treats the Transylvanian space has not approached topics in this sense in a truly in-depth manner. Some of the studies on social history, economic history, material culture, the history of architecture or art history have tangentially touched on aspects of restitution specific to the history of everyday life. The post-communist period brought about a significant revitalization of local historiographical interest in researching aspects of everyday life and the medieval and pre-modern mentality.<sup>18</sup> The investigations, however, mainly focused on the extra-Carpathian areas, which had been treated more rigorously by the scholarly literature and for which, as such, there was more written and archaeological information.<sup>19</sup> As far as historical Transylvania and ancient *Partium* are concerned, the researches were (perhaps subjectively) circumscribed, given the lack of sufficient documentation and material culture, mainly to the pre-modern era (17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> centuries).<sup>20</sup>

In this context, there is a pressing need for an initial endeavour to systematically address the research on the primary facets of daily life in the urban centres of German foundation and tradition in Transylvania during the Late Middle Ages. Such an effort would prove essential and beneficial.<sup>21</sup> In order to conduct a study that truly matches the quality and rigour of the current European historical writing, there are two requirements: on the one hand, an inquiry into the historiography of the subject and its related fields,<sup>22</sup> and, on the other hand, a review of the

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<sup>18</sup> For further details, see Cosmin Cătălin Rusu, "Cercetarea vieții cotidiene în principalele centre urbane ale Transilvaniei medievale târzii. Modelul orașelor ardeleni de fundație și tradiție germană. I. Repere și contexte istoriografice," in *Pasiune și Rigoare. Noi tentații istoriografice. Omagiu profesorului Ovidiu Ghitta*, Ionuț Costea, Radu Mârza, Valentin Orga (eds.) (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, Mega, 2022), 698-716.

<sup>19</sup> Emil I. Emandi, "Viața cotidiană la Suceava lui Ștefan," *Academica*, 2, no. 3-5 (1992); Maria Magdalena Székely, "Pentru o istorie a vieții zilnice," *Magazin Istoric*, 31, no. 5 (1997).

<sup>20</sup> Costin Feneșan, "Viața cotidiană la hotarul osmano-transilvănean în secolul al XVII-lea. Câteva documente inedite," *Banatica*, 12, no. 2 (1993); Avram Andea, *Iluminism și modernizare în societatea românească* (Cluj-Napoca: Inter-Tonic, 1996), particularly chapter "Înnoirile vieții cotidiene".

<sup>21</sup> Any research project dedicated to the topic must consider a continual contextualization of Transylvanian cities within the broader framework of the urban settlements of the Kingdom of Hungary, and the city structures specific to the areas of German colonization in Central-South-Eastern Europe, respectively.

<sup>22</sup> Topic discussed in the first part of this study. See note 17.

(re)sources available for study and an attempt to outline a possible analysis grid for the field of the history of late medieval daily life, applied to the case of Transylvanian cities.

From a spatial perspective, the area of interest for the aforementioned analysis is inside the borders of historical Transylvania, circumscribed to the main Transylvanian urban centres of the late Middle Ages – Sibiu, Braşov, Cluj, Bistriţa, Sighişoara, Sebeş and Mediaş. Connected to the evolution of Central-European urban life, from which they originate and with which they maintain a continuous and active connection, the Transylvanian cities established a nuanced specificity from the early decades of their existence. This required the development of clearly defined political-administrative models (proper to the privileged community of the Transylvanian Saxons, in the wider context of the particularism of the Transylvanian Voivodeship), of specific socio-economic frameworks (based on the essential functionality of colonization and perfected by the plurivalence of the socio-professional communities united in Transylvania) and, last but not least, of certain local ethno-confessional variables.

The timeframe under scrutiny in a study of this kind focuses on the Transylvanian late medievalism. Moreover, it must provide a cultural-historical perspective synchronous with the Central European urban realities – as they are usually delimited historically and historiographically – namely between the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Between these coordinates, the two chronological milestones are (re)marked from a cultural-historical perspective by the *de jure* foundation of Transylvanian cities (the vast majority of them, during the 14<sup>th</sup> century), and by the appearance and early manifestations of the Renaissance and the religious Reform, respectively (the decades around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). In the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the significant differences between the Western European cities and those of the Kingdom of Hungary would begin to disappear. Likewise, recent contributions regarding the history of culture in medieval Hungary propose the same chronological interval as a landmark for a new stage in the evolution-transformation of the urban (and rural) structures of everyday life.<sup>23</sup>

The current historiography generally agrees that the upper chronological limit of the Transylvanian medieval era is the interval between the Battle of Mohács (1526) and the period of the establishment

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<sup>23</sup> Iván Bertényi, "Hungarian Culture in the Middle Ages," in *A cultural history of Hungary. From the Beginnings to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. László Kósa (Budapest: Corvina, 1999), passim.

of the Principality of Transylvania (corresponding to a wider chronological segment, circumscribed to the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century). Thus, the decades of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century mark, even socio-politically, the end of an important era in the historical evolution of Central-South-Eastern Europe (and implicitly of the Kingdom of Hungary). Similarly, for the Transylvanian Voivodeship, it marks the beginning a new historical stage. The Transylvanian province – integrated into the kingdom, and then independent – in the interval between the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, goes through a period of general development of the structures of urban life, now reaching a level of relative synchronization with the specific phenomena of the European central urban civilization environments. In the current phase of historical knowledge, the conventional chronological perspective emerges as the preferred approach for the initial organization of temporal segments in the analysis of the history of the medieval daily urban life in Transylvania. Naturally, the delimitation of more precise time intervals will be possible as the investigation progresses and as chronological landmarks derived directly from the historical evolutions of everyday urban existence emerge.

**The problem of sources.** A fundamental aspect for defining the research framework is the issue of the primary sources. For the case of medieval Transylvania, they mainly include written sources, in addition to certain testimonies of material culture and iconographic sources. There is a rather limited number of written sources on the topic of the late medieval daily life of the Transylvanian urban area, which hinders most research endeavours. Moreover, the preserved materiality and pictorial representations preserved in relation to these settlements are also rare and fragmentary.

For a study dedicated to the topic, written sources provide the fundamental information that is indeed rich, in terms of quantity and quality. The information is also highly diverse: epigraphic and numismatic, heraldic and sigillographic, cartographic testimonies, urban ordinances and regulations, legal texts, privileges and statutes of guilds and brotherhoods, inventories/registries, city/tax/customs/guilds account books, dowry sheets, diaries, wills, city chancellery documents, notary documents, public and private correspondence, town chronicles, hagiographical writings, accounts of foreign travellers. The limited extent of their preservation, together with the subjective reality of a historiographical delay in terms of the identifying, cataloguing and critical editing of medieval documents (registries), poses challenges in the comprehensive exploration of written information from that era. As a

result, steps towards exhaustive utilization of historical records are not always easy to undertake. The particular case of the Transylvanian medieval towns is somewhat privileged by the accessibility of certain document collections (official documents, accounts, guild statutes, diaries, chronicles, wills), mainly due to the sustained efforts of Saxon historiography, which, starting from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, published (or signalled) a good part of written sources with direct or indirect references to the Transylvanian Saxon communities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> For example, we can mention: Albert Berger, *Urkunden Regesten aus dem Archiv der Stadt Bistritz in Siebenbürgen*: I-II (1203-1570) Ernst Wagner (ed.) (Köln, Wien: Böhlau 1986); Ibid., III. (1571-1585), Albert Berger. Mit Ion Dordea, Ioan Drăgan und Konrad G. Gündisch (eds.) (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 1995); *Documente privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în secolul XV și XVI*. Vol. I. (1413-1508), Ioan Bogdan (ed.) (Bucharest: 1905); *Documente și regeste privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și Ungaria în secolele XV-XVI* Ioan Bogdan (ed.) (Bucharest: 1902); Gernot Nussbächer, *Documente privind meșteșugurile din Sighișoara. Catalog de documente, 1376-1598* (Brașov: Aldus 1998); Karl Nussbächer, Friedrich Stenner, Friedrich W. Seraphin, *Verzeichnis der Kronstädter Zunft-Urkunden. Festschrift gelegentlich des Gewerbetages und der Gewerbe-Ausstellung zu Kronstadt im August 1886* (Kronstadt, 1886); *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Kronstadt (in Siebenbürgen)*: Bd. I. *Rechnungen (1503-1526)* (Kronstadt, 1885); Bd. II. *Rechnungen (1526-1540)* (Kronstadt, 1889); Bd. III. *Rechnungen (1475, 1541-1550, 1571)* (Kronstadt, 1896); Bd. IV. *Chroniken und Tagebücher I. (1143-1867)* (Kronstadt, 1903); Bd. V. *Chroniken und Tagebücher II. (1392-1851)* (Kronstadt, 1909); Bd. VI. *Chroniken und Tagebücher III. (1549-1825)* (Kronstadt, 1915); Bd. VII, Beiheft 1. *Die Beamten der Stadt Brassó (Kronstadt) von Anfängen der städtischen Verwaltung bis auf der Gegenwart. Zusammengestellt von Friedrich Stenner* (Kronstadt, 1916); Bd. VIII, Heft 1. *Annales ecclesiastici. Schriften der Mag. Marcus Fronius* (Kronstadt, 1926); Bd. VIII, Heft 2. *Annales ecclesiastici 1556 (1531) - 1706 (1763)* (Kronstadt, 1928 and Heidelberg, 2002); Bd. IX. *Zunfturkunden (1420-1580)* (Heidelberg, 1999); *A kolozsmonostori konvent jegyzőkönyvei. I-II (1289-1556). Kivonatokban közzéteszi és a bevezető tanulmányt írta Jakó Zs.* (Budapest, 1990); Alexandru Lapedatu, *Documentele istorice din arhivele Brașovului* (Bucharest: 1903); Stoica Nicolaescu, *Documente slavo-române cu privire la relațiile Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Ardealul în secolele XV și XVI. Privilegii comerciale, scrisori domnești și particulare din arhivele Sibiului, Brașovului și Bistriței din Transilvania* (Bucharest, 1905); *Quellen zur Geschichte Siebenbürgens aus sächsischen Archiven*: Bd. I. *Rechnungen aus dem Archiv der Stadt Hermannstadt und der sächsischen Nation (1380-1516)*, Wilhelm Capesius, Heinrich Herbert, Friedrich Teutsch (eds.) (Hermannstadt: 1880); *Quellen zur Geschichte der Stadt Hermannstadt*. Bd. II. *Handel und Gewerbe in Hermannstadt und in den Sieben Stühlen (1224-1579)*, Monica Vlaicu (ed.) (Hermannstadt: 2003); Bd. III. *Inschriften der Stadt Hermannstadt aus dem Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit*. Bearb. von Ioan Albu. (Sibiu/Heidelberg: 2002); *534 documente istorice slavo-române din Țara-Românească și Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul (1346-1603) din arhivele orașelor Brașov și Bistrița* – originally published in Slavic, together with its Romanian translation, printed in Vienna, between 1905-1906, by the Adolf Holzhausen printing press, under the supervision of Grigore G. Tocilescu (Bucharest: 1931); *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*: Bd. I. (1191-1342) (Hermannstadt: 1892); Bd. II. (1342-1390) (Hermannstadt: 1897); Bd. III. (1391-1415) (Hermannstadt: 1902); Bd. IV. (1416-1437) (Hermannstadt: 1937); Bd. V. (1438-1457)



In order to properly exploit these documents in the reconstruction of various aspects of daily life, they must be adequately processed, a task that seems to prove rather challenging at times. The language of the sources is often difficult to understand. Medieval terminology – which, in the particular case of Transylvania, gradually became multilingual – is never consistent and, as a rule, does not convey certain data to the later reader. The definition of a consistent and critical reading grid, integrated and consistently applied to each category of documentary material, is only with rare exceptions practiced in historiography with reference to the medieval urban history of Transylvania. In this context, the method of cataloguing and ordering information must follow a clear structure – in accordance with well-defined categories of information – in order to allow simultaneous corroboration with the complementary elements offered by material culture and/or iconography.

Very varied in scope, the information identifiable in the written sources offers a relatively large volume of specific data, which, however, could be correlated and systematised according to the coordinates of the classical historical reconstruction only to a small extent. A symptomatic example from this point of view is represented by the accounts of foreign travellers, which mentioned the medieval urban centres of Transylvania. Analysed from a critical perspective, the information provided by this type of sources<sup>25</sup> remains permanently linked to the person writing them

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(Bucharest: 1975); Bd. VI. (1458-1473) (Bucharest: 1981); Bd. VII. (1474-1486) (Bucharest: 1991). Franz Zimmermann, Carl Werner, Georg Müller, Michael Auner, Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer und Konrad G. Gündisch (eds.).

<sup>25</sup> The earliest accounts that reference the medieval urban centres of Transylvania usually offer a very varied palette of relevant data from the point of view of everyday realities, but they are mostly succinct. Their accuracy is difficult to approximate with respect to the information presented and they are almost without exception impossible to verify through other types of sources. Known since the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the descriptions and assessments of city visitors or chroniclers refer, as the case may be, to aspects regarding: a) the etymology of city names, the delimitation of the most important/significant urban centres (in terms of wealth, extent, population, political-military/economic-social/confessional-ethnic role), urban developments (from market status to city status); b) the administrative and territorial organization of urban communities (suburbs and neighbourhoods), the social categories present and active in city life, the population of cities (ethnicities, languages and confessions, restrictions regarding access to cities and the ethnic distribution of neighbourhoods and suburbs); c) description of the city's surroundings (climate elements, relief, hydrographic network), peri-urban dromocracy; d) city fortification systems (curtain walls, towers, gates, ramparts, ditches, canal networks), urban architecture; e) supplying cities (with water, food/salt, gold); f) clothing; g) studies and urban libraries; h) town halls/yards; i) urban settlements as exchange markets (carried products, merchants) and j) qualities and characteristics of the townspeople, traditions and customs, behavioural attitudes, mentalities and urban imaginary

(and to their employment/involvement or their degree of knowledge regarding the events and realities they present, respectively), or, as the case may be, to subsequent authors who take over and circulate the information, often mimetically. Naturally, data with a predominantly descriptive character usually have the chance, at least apparently, of restitutions closer to the reality of the era. Practically, each testimony is constituted in a separate situation. Sometimes, the information does not arrive directly, but is “filtered” by other characters, while the author of the text was merely the editor (for example, in the case of stories that borrow parts from older works). At other times, the personal experience of the “traveller” was very short-lived and extremely limited, from a documentary viewpoint, in the sense of the traveller’s access to correct or relevant information. Moreover, personal experiences and impressions – be they positive or negative – impact the degree of subjectivity in descriptions. Some authors do not use their urban way of being/thinking directly, but they do resort to comparisons with aspects from their own environments and with the living standards of urban areas – usually rather condescending towards the realities encountered. Despite the fact that the information from these sources is often vague and difficult to verify, it represents a valuable auxiliary for completing the image of everyday life in the cities of the Transylvanian Middle Ages. However, their analysis must be completed by an additional reading key. The nuances used by the editors of these narrative sources for the translation/explanation of certain terms were not always the most appropriate. If, in the initial (general) context of the translations, these terms probably seemed insignificant, at the time of an analysis that focuses on recomposing the smallest details of everyday existence, the exact meanings and messages of these notions become very important.<sup>26</sup>

The specificity of the known documentary sources in relation to the Transylvanian medieval cities often calls for exclusively retrospective investigations. The oldest preserved written information (often only from the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and in some cases even from the second half of the century) conditions and limits, in certain situations, the historical reconstruction to the formulation of assumptions and theories – which must be verified by means of future introspections and analyses specific to each topic addressed separately. In the rare situations in which it appears, information from the 14<sup>th</sup> century is usually very succinct with regard to the relevant elements of different aspects of everyday life. Its volume, complexity and accuracy increase especially during the second

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<sup>26</sup> This is the case, for example, of terms such as streets, canals, neighbourhoods, suburbs, etc.

half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and during the decades of the first half of the following century.

Naturally, the reconstruction of the cities' daily existence could benefit from the contribution of material culture testimonies (as the case may be, recovered through archaeological means, identifiable through observations in the field or by capitalizing on museum or private collections) and iconographic sources from the era or from later. These types of sources are practically indispensable for deepening (and often even for deciphering!) the information that can be found in written sources, facilitating the real and/or visual support, of substance, for outlining complex and comprehensive images of everyday life. Unfortunately, the case of Transylvania offers only a small opportunity to capitalize on these types of sources. Medieval urban archaeology research has not had the span required here until now. Objective or subjective reasons mostly restricted it from the point of view of the investigated area. At the same time, however, the processing of the revealed material (or preserved in different collections) was not generally carried out at an appropriate scientific standard and, therefore, cannot be used in studies dedicated to the reconstruction of everyday life: a consistent technical-methodological language has not yet been defined, to be used specifically for this field; the illustration auxiliary to the texts is often missing or practically unusable because of the lack of interest in details and graphic/photographic reconstructions; cultural-historical context interpretations are almost completely absent. Regarding the iconographic sources, the situation is partly similar. The late medieval testimonies with historical value – identifiable in the wall paintings, sculptures and manifestations of minor art in Transylvanian cities – have a rather exceptional character. These have been catalogued and returned to the scientific circuit almost exclusively from the perspective of sources specific to art history reconstructions. Therefore, they require a fresh approach, applied to a reinterpreted analysis grid. The earliest cartographic resources date back to the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, detailed elements crucial for reconstructing everyday life frames typically emerge in these sources only from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Research schedule and analysis grid.** Based on the historiographic documentation, the theoretical-methodological excursion and the identification of the potential and the limits of the available sources, the perspective that this study proposes is that of a research program dedicated to the reconstruction of the history of everyday life in the urban centres of late medieval Transylvania. The approach is

structured in three parts: a) that of the recomposing of frames and the dynamics of daily urban life; b) that of revealing the fundamental structures of everyday life in cities and c) that of identifying the challenges and solutions assumed by the day-to-day existence of individuals, groups and the urban community.

A first research approach considers the delimitation of the natural and cultural environmental frameworks of the emergence and development of urban everyday life. Thematically, the analysis starts from the identification of the environments of formation and functioning-development of the daily life of urban settlements, studying their daily structure and morphology, and follows the individual/community relationship <--> daily urban existence/perception. Urban settlements can thus offer a bivalent perspective: one from their outside (what could be perceived in the concrete-real and imaginary-symbolic way when you approached these settlements and gradually discovered their suburbs and urban areas, streets and houses, people and customs) and one of their specific, inner identity (what and how exactly the inhabitants perceived in relation to the daily life of their own settlement).

1. I. "The city" outside the city. Proximity and urban extensions
1. II. The boundaries of the "Inner City": perimeter-defensive structures; walls and towers; gates, roads and bridges
1. III. Unbuilt perimeters and public spaces (streets and squares)
1. IV. (Re)Presentations of the city: own images and "external" perspectives
1. V. The advantages and risks of mobility: People (travel) and Goods (trade)

The second direction of research is dedicated to reconstructing the main milestones of daily life in cities, starting from the fundamental existential needs and reaching the most relevant identity resources for individuals and communities:

2. I. Food traditions and dining culture
2. II. Clothing and "costume"
2. III. Housing: home and household
2. IV. Daily activities with gainful functions: urban occupations and (hand)crafts
2. V. "The third time" - the time of feast and celebration
2. VI. The everyday functions of ethnicity and religion

Finally, the third component project of the program analyses the dynamics of everyday life in its own sense, attempting to identify the issues (challenges) permanently generated and the solutions (answers) identified in the context of existence of the urban community:

- 3. I. Care for water
- 3. II. Care for food
- 3. III. Care for wood and construction materials
- 3. IV. Protection against fire
- 3. V. Sanitary protection and hygiene
- 3. VI. Safety in the city and city security
- 3. VII. Natural phenomena and calamities, famine, epidemics and epizootics
- 3. VIII. Waste and pollution

From an analytical perspective, the research aims to trace the interdependence between different elements of everyday life. These – conditioning and influencing everyday life – offer the chance to rediscover the Transylvanian late medieval cities in their specific evolutionary dynamics, as the main vectors of mobility (“import” and innovation) and confluences (“modernity” and progress). In classical historical reconstruction research approaches, the individual or the community have rarely been actively integrated into these frameworks. For example, extensive works have been written about the civil, military or religious medieval urban architecture of Transylvania, but questions regarding how and to what extent these constructions were exploited in the most concrete way – in the mundane or, as the case may be, the exceptional everyday life – by the people who built/operated them or by those for whom they were intended, have not been addressed. The multiplication of this type of investigation/model should be applied to aspects regarding food or clothing, to the profitable activities and moments of relaxation of the inhabitants, to urban hygiene (personal and public) or to the challenges raised by the risks of mobility, famine, wars, epidemics and natural disasters. To the extent to which the sources are accessible, an investigation subsumed to the research of the daily life of the city also has the chance to capture details of ordinary life, common to individual or community experience (vital needs); conventional elements, with a socio-religious substrate (social conventions and norms, moral and ethical values) and the valorisation of structural factors (socio-economic or material/object culture).

The main purpose of such a research program can be fulfilled by setting up a framework initiative to investigate the history of medieval and pre-modern everyday life, which proposes the creation of documentary data banks (for written sources, material culture and iconography), of certain monographic studies dedicated to relevant case studies and thematic volumes. The envisaged model is that of quantitative and qualitative studies, which are integrated and

comparative, part of the already established research dedicated to the environments of the late medieval and premodern German tradition urban everyday life of Central Europe.

The research of different aspects and manifestations of everyday existence can and must be relevant because the everyday (re)constructs images and categories of life. Initiating projects and, in parallel, methodological debates dedicated to the topic must become a priority for Transylvanian historical environments, where such restitutions with reference to the medieval and pre-modern world are almost completely absent. Transylvanian historiography needs histories of everyday life, because only they can recompose, analyse and explain the ambivalent relationship between people and their (structural) living environment. The modern investigation of medieval and pre-modern everyday life must also undertake in this historiographical space the delimitation from the old approaches of the history of culture, by employing at least four elements: a different way of interrogating everyday life, seen as a human/object relationship and (mainly) human /life environment; a changed perspective of analysis, mainly oriented towards the social history and that of the structures; the delimitation of its own critical methods of analysis, adapted to the local cultural-historical specifics and, last but not least, the undertaking of the reconstruction of the history of everyday life seen not only as an approach that narrates and describes, but also as one that structures and explains.

# Correlations Between Social and National Mobility in Carniola

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**Abstract:** The article provides a brief overview of the position of the nobility in Slovenia. First, it focuses on the connection between the nobility and historiography, which from the mid-19th century was increasingly burdened by the national struggles of the past. The findings show that until the mid-19th century the nobility was strongly integrated into Slovenian society, including through the use of the Slovene language, but was then forced into a national definition, and as a rule (with few exceptions) chose to take the German side. More than a change in ethnic identity, a change in social identity was relevant in the early modern period. The new nobility tried as much as possible to adopt and take on a manner of behaviour that suited to their new status. This especially meant the purchase of landed property and forming kinship ties with other noble families. The article concludes with a brief overview of the fate of the nobility in Slovenia after 1918.

**Keywords:** Nobility, Slovenian territory, national struggles, historiography, ethnicity, social mobility

**Rezumat:** Articolul oferă o scurtă prezentare a situației nobilimii în Slovenia. În primul rând, se concentrează asupra legăturii dintre nobilime și istoriografie, care de la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea a fost din ce în ce mai mult marcată de luptele naționale ale trecutului. Concluziile arată că, până la jumătatea secolului al XIX-lea, nobilimea a fost puternic integrată în societatea slovenă, inclusiv prin utilizarea limbii slovene, dar apoi a fost forțată să se definească la nivel național și, de regulă (cu câteva excepții), a optat pentru o identitate germană. Mai mult decât o schimbare a identității etnice, o schimbare a identității sociale a fost de asemenea relevantă în perioada modernă timpurie. Noua nobilime a încercat pe cât posibil

să adopte și să preia un mod de comportament adecvat noului lor statut. Acest lucru a însemnat în special achiziționarea de proprietăți funciare și formarea de legături de rudenie cu alte familii nobile. Articolul se încheie cu o scurtă trecere în revistă a sorții nobilimii din Slovenia după 1918.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Nobilime, Slovenia, mișcare națională, istoriografie, etnie, mobilitate socială

## Introduction

Carniola became part of the Habsburg possessions *de jure* in 1282 and *de facto* in 1335 and remained so until the end of 1918, forming together with Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia the so-called Inner Austria. Its largest cities were Ljubljana (Laibach), which was its capital, Kranj (Krainburg), Novo mesto (Rudolfswerth) and Škofja Loka (Bischofslack). Among all the Habsburg lands, Carniola had the largest share of Slovene population. In fact, it was the only one in which Slovenes dominated. Slovenes also lived in other parts of Inner Austria, such as southern Styria, southern Carinthia, and the countryside of Gorizia. Elsewhere they were heavily mixed with the German- or Italian-speaking population.

Nevertheless, the society in Carniola was no different from the society in other lands. The Carniolan society comprised various strata, with the nobles and affluent burghers occupying the upper echelons. Below them were the townspeople and farmers, who held the status of subjects until the land release in 1848.

Proportionally, the nobles in the Carniolan society were a minority, as their numbers were limited to a few dozen families. Although detailed quantitative research on the historical society in Slovenia has not yet been carried out, we can speak of per mille in terms of nobility. According to some data, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, only 0.5% of the Carniolan population belonged to the nobility, and most of the nobles were concentrated in Ljubljana, where they made up about 3% of the urban population.<sup>1</sup> The number of nobles in Carniolan society experienced a gradual increase, particularly in the nineteenth century, as elevations to noble status became more frequent. These elevations were often tied to a specific period of service in the army or the

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<sup>1</sup> Marko Štuhec, "Der krainische Adel in der Zeit von Almanachs Tätigkeit in Krain," in *Almanach and Painting in The Second Half of the 17th Century in Carniola*, Barbara Murovec, Matej Klemenčič, Mateja Breščak (eds.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2006), 109; Vlado Valenčič, "O gospodarski strukturi ljubljanskega prebivalstva v začetku 18. stoletja" [On the economic structure of the population in Ljubljana in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], *Kronika* 5, no. 1 (1957): 8.



receipt of appropriate decorations, such as the Order of the Iron Crown or the Order of Leopold. However, even with this expansion, the nobility never exceeded a few percent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

In Carniola, however, the question of the nobility was somewhat distinctive, within which the social and national aspects were mixed; this issue spread after the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy to the entire Slovene territory within the framework of the new Yugoslav state. In fact, the connection between nobility and Slovenes, or rather the lack of it has been stirring the spirits since the appearance of national frictions in the nineteenth century, namely after 1848, when the claim that Slovenes did not have their own nobility was incorporated in the political discourse. From a strictly formal-legal point of view, this is true. The Slovenes did not have a sovereign Slovene ruler surrounded by a nobility that would define itself as Slovene. The rulers of almost the entire Slovene territory were continuously Habsburgs, from the end of the Middle Ages (also Prekmurje from 1526 and Venetian Istrian and Venetian Slovenian from 1797), and the nobility defined themselves either as belonging to the Habsburgs and to the Holy Roman Empire or by provincial affiliation – Carniolan, Styrian, Carinthian, Gorizian, etc.<sup>3</sup>

One of the main questions posed by the present discussion revolved around the connection between the Slovene national idea, which was part of the modern discourse, and the nobility, which was a relic of the past. Is the phrase “Slovene nobility” justified or not? The antagonism, manifested in the Slovene territory between the nobility and the Slovene national idea, offers a specific answer to the question of what the connection between the ethnic and the social identity or between the ethnic and the social mobility was.

As we will see below, there were a good number of Slovenes among the members of the former Habsburg nobility, who “hid” under German names after being elevated to nobility. What was the reason for this and what were the consequences of this practice? Furthermore, the discussion will try to shed light, at least to some extent, on the relationship between the old, feudal nobility and the new nobles, while

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<sup>2</sup> Hannes Stekl, “Der erbländische Adel,” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918, Band IX, Soziale Strukturen, 1. Teil, Teilband 2*, Ulrike Harmat (ed.) (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 951–1013; Arno Kerschbaumer, *Nobilitierungen unter Regentschaft Kaiser Karl I. / IV. Károly király (1916–1921)* (Graz: Selbstverlag, 2016), 10–48.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Štih, “Srednjeveško plemstvo in slovensko zgodovinopisje” [Medieval nobility and Slovene historiography], in *Melikov zbornik. Slovenci v zgodovini in njihovi srednjeevropski sosedje*, Vincenc Rajšp (ed.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2001), 61–72; Miha Preinfalk, “Zgodovinopisje na Slovenskem in njegov odnos do plemstva” [Historiography in Slovenia in its relations to nobility], *Zgodovinski časopis* 58, no. 3/4 (2004): 507–516.

also touching on the question of why individuals actually applied for the noble status or what the gained advantages were.

### **Brief overview of the research on nobility in Slovenia<sup>4</sup>**

The research on the nobility in Slovenia has a peculiar evolution. Until the end of the First World War, it followed the established patterns of research which shared a degree of similarity to the one in other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, although with certain specifics, which, to a certain extent, were even mutually exclusive.

Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the national conflicts also made their way into historiography. This led particular authors of Slovene orientation and those who wrote in Slovenian to refrain from discussing the nobility, which largely (but not entirely!) formed part of the German camp. Instead, they committed to other – for the lack of a better term – more Slovene topics. The focus of research was shifted to the citizenry, the history of cities (their emergence, rights, development, mayors, and city administration), art and architecture, industry, and so forth. Articles on the nobility in historiographical publications were increasingly becoming an exception rather than the rule. For example, the German periodical *Mitteilungen des Musealvereines für Krain* dedicated about one-third or one-quarter of space to contributions that discussed, in one way or another, the life and work of the nobility, whereas Slovene periodical publications had by the end of the First World War featured articles on this topic only occasionally.

However, in parallel with the introduction of the Slovenian language into historiography and in congruence with the awakening Slovene and German national ideas, the first attempts were also made to discuss the nobility in the Slovene territory as Slovene. Slovene historians started to Slovenize personal names of noblemen and translate their “family names” with the use of Slovene toponyms (thus, Johann Auersperg became Ivan Turjaški, Johann Josef Egkh-Hungerspach was renamed Ivan Jožef Brdsko-Vogrski, and count Friedrich of Cilli was converted in *Celjska kronika* into Mirko Celjski). In this way, historians aimed to demonstrate that although the nobility might have been culturally part of the Germanic world, it was closely affiliated and, in some segments, completely fused with the Slovene environment, in which it lived and worked.

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<sup>4</sup> This topic is more thoroughly described (with an extended list of literature) in Preinfalk, “Der Adel in Krain zwischen Slowenen und Deutschen,” in *Habsburgischer Adel. Zwischen Nation – Nationalismus – Nationalsozialismus (1870–1938/1935)*, Marija Wakounig, Václav Horčíčka, Jan Zupanič (eds.) (Wien – Hamburg: New Academic Press, 2021), 239–245.

After 1918, when the Slovene area became part of the new Yugoslav state, the research interest of Slovene historiography in the (Habsburg) nobility decreased even more. Social marginalization of the nobility after 1918, which swept across all successor states of Austria-Hungary, is also reflected in the interwar historiography. The historiographical periodicals of that time (*Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* [Journal of History and Ethnography] (since 1904), *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* [Newsletter of the Museum Society of Slovenia], *Kronika slovenskih mest* [Chronicle of Slovene towns], etc.) focused primarily on the economic activities and everyday life of the citizenry and rural population. The main research topics were to cover the “genuine” Slovene history or the history of the Slovenes, and also the history of other Yugoslav nations, which now formed a new state together with the Slovenes. Articles on the former German or Austrian nobility as well as their lives and work were becoming increasingly sporadic.

After the Second World War, the new communist government delivered a final blow to the nobility by driving them to exile or internment and by destroying or nationalizing their property. Slovene postwar historiography corresponded to the spirit of the new times as well. However, it should be emphasized that the almost complete disappearance of the nobility from the Slovene postwar historiography was not so much a reflection of the postwar political orientation in Slovenia as it was a continuation of the process that was ignited in Slovene society and hence its historiography by the national conflicts at the end of the nineteenth century. The difference between the prewar and postwar periods in historiography is in that historiographical works or articles on the nobility were no longer merely sporadic – they had disappeared altogether. The positive role of the nobility and its influence on the development of the Slovene territories were forgotten, and the ideologically motivated emphasis was placed solely on the nobility’s non-Slovene descent and exploitative status. The historiography of the first postwar decades portrayed the nobility in the Slovene territory as a “necessary evil”, as something that ought to be mentioned in passing but not studied in detail.

Notable changes occurred after 1982, when the leading Slovene historians concluded at their twenty-first gathering in Celje (Cilli) that the existing image of Slovene history required corrections and that it should also include the nobility.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Štih, “Srednjeveško plemstvo,” 61–72.

However, the first substantial change in studying the nobility took place only a decade later. The years leading up to the turn of the century witnessed the emergence of works that discussed the nobility as a whole.<sup>6</sup> The trend continued with an increasing number of historians devoting their attention to the social aspects of the nobility, their culture and everyday life, and partly also to their genealogies or family connections. We must note that research on the nobility primarily focused on earlier periods, whereas the history of the nobility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still received a very poor coverage. Occasional discussions shed light on the position of the nobility within the framework of national struggles<sup>7</sup> or economic developments, and no substantial analytical and synthetic research was conducted on the nobility as such. A major white area is especially represented by the period after 1918. The fate of the former nobility after the First World War was primarily the focus of the research conducted by Austrian historians,<sup>8</sup> while the destiny of the remnants of the Habsburg nobility in Yugoslavia has largely remained unresearched until now. A few historical studies touched upon the former nobility as well, e.g., studies on the agrarian reform,<sup>9</sup> but a more systematic approach towards the nobility's formal and legal status, everyday life, and (un)changed identity in Yugoslavia has only been undertaken in recent years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> E.g., Maja Žvanut, *Od viteza do gospoda* [From a knight to a seigneur] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1994); Marko Štuhec, *Rdeča postelja, ščurki in solze vdove Prešeren (plemiški zapuščinski inventarji 17. stoletja kot zgodovinski vir)* [Red bed, cockroaches and tears of Prešeren's widow (noble probate inventories from the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a historical source)] (Ljubljana: Škuc, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Dragan Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani: 1861–1918* [Germans in Ljubljana] (Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Stekl, "Österreichs Adel im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Adel und Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Ernst Bruckmüller, Franz Eder, Andrea Schnöller (eds.) (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 101–139; Peter Wiesflecker, "„Das ist jetzt unsere Ordnung!“ Der innerösterreichische Adel zwischen 1918 und 1945," in *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark*, Sonderdruck, CI. Jahrgang, Gerhard Pferschy, Elisabeth Schöggel-Ernst, Karl Spreitzhofer (eds.) (Graz: Historische Landeskommission für Steiermark, 2010), 195–246.

<sup>9</sup> Stane Granda, "Razpad posesti knezov Auerspergov na Kranjskem" [Downfall of the estate of the Princes of Auersperg in Carniola], *Kronika* 28, no. 3 (1980): 200–212.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Preinfalk, "Habsburško plemstvo in leto 1918," [The Habsburg nobility and the year 1918] in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, Aleš Gabrič (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019), 251–266; Mira Miladinović Zalaznik, "Nepartizanski odpor proti okupatorju na Slovenskem: primer plemiške družine Maasburg in sorodnikov," [The non-partisan resistance against the occupier in Slovenia: the case of the Maasburg family and their relatives] in *Annale: anali za istrske in mediteranske študije* 29, no. 4 (2019): 645–660.

### **Ethnic mobility – can we speak of Slovene nobility?**

One of the foundations for the antagonisms between Slovenes and nobility was laid by historian Josip Apih (1853–1911). In his article entitled *Plemstvo in narodni razvoj* [Nobility and national development], which he published in the newspaper *Ljubljanski zvon* [Ljubljana bell] in 1887, he argued that Slovenes were only farmers, and that all the other classes in Slovenia had always been foreigners, especially Germans. According to him, this did not only apply to the nobility, but also to the bourgeoisie. As a Slovene character, Apih acknowledged only the nobility from the time of independent Carantania: “That there is no nobility in our country today is, unfortunately, only too well known; it is also certain that we had our nobility, as long as the nation enjoyed freedom, before subjugation by the Germans and Hungarians. Of course, this nobility was not destroyed and wandered away suddenly; it lasted at least a little longer; then it was buried by the diluvium of foreignness, and thus inflicted a terrible wound on the whole nation.”<sup>11</sup>

The lion’s share of the perception over the nobility in Slovenia as a (German) foreigner was also influenced by the fact that practically all written communication took place in German, and most of this material was created in aristocratic circles as bearers of social and cultural development. In particular, this view has been established since the nineteenth century, when the use of language became a tool for expressing one’s nationality.<sup>12</sup>

If, on the one hand, it is true that the “Slovene nobility” did not exist as such (at least in the legal sense of the word), on the other hand, the assertion that there were no nobles among the Slovenes is by no means true. Detailed research of individual noble families in Slovenia revealed a good number of those who could be defined as Slovene. The distorted image was created due to the custom that individuals often changed their name when they were elevated to noble status or replaced the original (Slovene) name with new aristocratic predicates.

Leaving aside the question of when we can talk about Slovenes in the national sense as we understand them today, a more in-depth examination of individual noble families in the area defined as Slovene consistently reveals a substantial number that can be accurately described as Slovene. For this purpose, their Slovene surname is almost the only

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<sup>11</sup> Josip Apih, “Plemstvo in narodni razvoj,” [Nobility and national development] *Ljubljanski zvon* 7, no. 3 (1887): 171–172. Slovene original: *Da plemstva dandanes pri nas ni, to je znano, žal, znano le preveč; isto tako gotovo je, da smo imeli svoje plemstvo, dokler je narod užival svobodo, pred podjarmljenjem po Nemcih in Madjarih. Seveda ni bilo to plemstvo uničeno in potujčeno hipoma; prebilo je vsaj po nekoliko še nekaj časa; potlej pa ga je zasul diluvij tujstva in s tem vsekali narodni celoti strašno rano.*

<sup>12</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 33.

indicator, but for the period in question, it is a strong enough proof that such noble families came from the Slovene ethnic environment. At the same time, research has shown that such families, even before being elevated to noble status, and almost without exception after that, either began to write their surname in German (or Italian) or completely changed it.

A few examples from the Early Modern Period can be cited in this respect. Adjunct in Carniola's professional bookkeeping, Lovrenc (Laurenz) Bulovec changed his surname to Wollwiz in 1696, when he was elevated to nobility,<sup>13</sup> half a century before Nikolaj (Nikolaus) Hvalica, a court master or house teacher (Hofmeister) at Prince Johann Ferdinand Porcia's and Count Johann Andreas Auersperg's house, signed himself as Qualiz(z)a (ennnobled in 1642).<sup>14</sup> When choosing a predicate that complemented the original surname, the most common option was that the nobleman (of Slovene descent) derived the predicate from his Slovene surname by simply adding a (usually German) suffix to the surname or the first syllable. Thus, e.g., court procurator in Ljubljana Janez Nikolaj (Johann Nikolaus) Knez (originally from Kranj) in 1706 decided on the predicate Knesenhoff;<sup>15</sup> Janez Pavel (Johann Paul) Jenko, first a customs officer in Novo mesto and later a castle owner in Mirna (Neudegg) in Lower Carniola, became knight of Jenkensfeld in 1773;<sup>16</sup> his namesake (and probably also a native of Škofja Loka) Janez Jakob (Johann Jakob) Jenko, a merchant and town councillor, upgraded his surname to Jenkensheim in 1749.<sup>17</sup> Andrej (Andreas) Premrov, the owner of the Vipava (Vippach) seigneurie, became knight of Premierstein in 1783,<sup>18</sup> while three decades earlier (namely, in 1754), his neighbours from Goče near Vipava, brothers Janez (Johann) and Franc (Franz) Šivic, were elevated to nobility with the predicate Schivizhoffen.<sup>19</sup> Among the provincial officials we can mention

<sup>13</sup> AT ÖStA [Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien], AVA [Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv/Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv], Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Bullowicz, Lorenz, 4. I. 1696.

<sup>14</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Qualiza, Niclas, 3. III. 1642. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 17. stoletje. 1. del: Od Billichgrätzov do Zanettijev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 17th century. Vol. 1: From Billichgrätz to Zanetti] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2014), 116–120.

<sup>15</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Khneß, Johann Nicolaus, 12. V. 1706.

<sup>16</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenko, Johann Paul, 19. IV. 1762; Hofadelsakte von Jenčo, Johann Paul, 26. IV. 1773; see also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 18. stoletje. 1. del: Od Andriolija do Zorna* [Noble families in Slovenia, 18th century. Vol. 1: From Andrioli to Zorn] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2013), 73–76.

<sup>17</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenkho, Johann Jacob, 13. XII. 1749. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 76–82.

<sup>18</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Premrau, Andreas, 18. IX. 1783. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 100–114.

<sup>19</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Schiviz, Johann u. Franz, 28. IX. 1754. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 143–154.

the customs officer and postmaster in Vipavski Križ (Heiligenkreuz) Janez Baltazar (Johann Balthasar) Nemec, who was ennobled as Nemizhoffen in 1633,<sup>20</sup> or Mihael Jožef (Michael Josef) Valič, provincial councillor in Carniola, who added the predicate Wallensperg to his surname in 1699.<sup>21</sup> This category would also include the medical doctor and Carniolan provincial physicist Franc Ksaver (Franz Xaver) Zalokar, from 1733 ennobled as Sallenstein,<sup>22</sup> while Gašper Ignac (Kaspar Ignaz) Vertič who in 1760 became the noble of Wertenfeld, was an artillery captain, that is, a military officer.<sup>23</sup>

If we draw a line under the above examples, we can see that simply considering the official surnames of individual noble families shows us a rather distorted picture of their ethnicity or at least their ethnic origin. At first glance, most of the noble families living in the Slovene territory really give the impression of being foreigners, as their surnames sound non-Slovenian. However, if we dig a little deeper into their history, we quickly come across their completely Slovene roots.

This finding is not new, as we encounter it already at the end of the nineteenth century, but it has been more or less forgotten. If, on the one hand, the aforementioned Apih "denationalized" all the nobility in Slovenia or at least denied its Slovene character, on the other hand, historians and other researchers soon began to correctly establish that Slovenes often hid behind "German" nobility. Thus, in his article on the Ljubljana city hospital in 1898, historian Ivan Vrhovec (1853–1902) wrote: "The wealthy citizens were almost entirely drawn to nobility and alienated from the aspirations of the bourgeoisie. A great loss in national terms! The ennobled citizens translated their names into German and adopted these translations as noble predicates."<sup>24</sup>

Two years later, an unknown author came to a similar conclusion, publishing in the newspaper *Slovenski list* [Slovene gazette] an article entitled *Plava kri na Kranjskem* [Blue blood in Carniola]:

"Among the Carniolan nobles, there are many who bear German names and believe that they were born by mother Germania, but their ancestors were of purely Slovene blood

<sup>20</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Nemiz, Johann Balthasar, 20. VIII. 1633.

<sup>21</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Wallich, Michael Joseph, 31. VIII. 1699.

<sup>22</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Sallocher, Franz Xaver, 6. IV. 1735.

<sup>23</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Werttich, Caspar Ignaz, 1. III. 1760.

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Vrhovec, "Meščanski špital," [Ljubljana city hospital] *Letopis Slovenske matice za leto 1898* 12, 3 (1898): 66. Slovene original: *Obogatelega meščana je skoraj vsakega potegnilo plemstvo nase ter ga odtujilo težnjam meščanskega stanu. V narodnem oziru velika izguba! Oplemeničeni meščani so svoja imena prelagali na nemški jezik ter te prestave privzemali kot plemenitaške predikate.*

with beautiful local names. When they were ennobled by the emperors, they were 'graciously allowed' to adopt a German surname, and usually the new nobles asked the emperor for this grace so that they could renounce their original Slovene name and call themselves only with a noble German name. Thus, they became Germans from Slovenes..."<sup>25</sup>

At this point, however, we must emphasize the fact that despite the ethnic fluidity of the new nobility, national or ethnic affiliation did not play a significant role until the end of the eighteenth century or even until 1848, as the provincial consciousness was at the forefront. This also applies to the nobility, which was already basically international or supranational.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the choice of a German predicate and the gradual abandonment of the Slovene names did not have a national component, but a social one. As the cultural image of the nobility in Slovenia was predominantly German, the newly elevated nobles integrated into the existing noble society more quickly and successfully by adopting this culture, which was to some extent symbolized by the change of family name. However, after 1848, the insistence on the Slovene name or its replacement with a German one was increasingly a reflection of the otherwise national affiliation or definition of a noble individual and his family.

In addition to the originally Slovene surname, one of the indicators of the Slovene character of the nobility in Carniola is also the general use of (colloquial) Slovene among the nobles in the (early) Modern Period. A lot of evidence regarding this kind of practice is known, from letters or correspondence<sup>26</sup> to various fragments that can be found in the historical sources. Numerous probate inventories thus reveal that the Carniolan nobles owned (and probably also read) the Slovene translation of the Bible by Jurij Dalmatin from 1583,<sup>27</sup> and in last wills of

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<sup>25</sup> Plava kri na Kranjskem. *Slovenski list*, 6 January 1900, 5 ([www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-AFPBSUNN](http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-AFPBSUNN), 17.3.2021). Slovene original: *Med kranjskimi plemenitniki jih je mnogo, ki nosijo nemška imena in menijo, da jih je rodila mati Germanija, a njihovi predniki so bili čisto slovenske krvi z lepimi domačimi imeni. Ko so bili od cesarjev poplemeničeni, se jim je 'milostno dovolilo', da so si smeli privzeti nemški priimek, in navadno so novi plemiči prosili cesarja še to milost, da so smeli odbacniti svoje prvotno slovensko ime in imenovati se samo s plemiškim nemškim imenom. Tako so postali iz Slovencev Nemci...*

<sup>26</sup> The most famous is undoubtedly the Slovene correspondence between Esther Maximiliana Baroness Coraduzzi from Koča Vas (Hallerstein) and her daughter Maria Izabela Baroness Marenzi from Trieste from the end of the seventeenth century (Pavle Merkù, *Slovenska plemiška pisma družin Marenzi - Coraduzzi s konca 17. stoletja* [Slovene noble letters of the Marenzi and Coraduzzi families from the end of the 17th century] (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 35.



noble people we often come across Slovene forms of personal names.<sup>28</sup> The Slavist Jurij Japelj (1744–1807) also teaches us about the prevalence of Slovene among the Carniolan nobility in an apology for Slovene, which he wrote in 1799 for the Carniolan and Carinthian provincial governor Franz Josef, Count Wurmbrand. In addition to the reasons why Slovene (Carniolan) is the most suitable language for learning and understanding other Slavic languages, he wrote, among other things: “Therefore, the practice should be introduced in general, which has always been valid within the nobility of Trieste and Carniola, that children should learn their language from Slovene maids at a tender youth and thus become bilingual.”<sup>29</sup> The first Archbishop of Gorizia, Karl Michael, Count of Attems (1711–1774), for example, also knew Slovene well enough to be able to preach in this language.<sup>30</sup> And when Johann Joseph De Grazia wrote in 1779 to his twelve-year-old nephew Athanasius, who was studying in the Hungarian Buda, he asked him how he was doing with his “Carniolan” (*lingua Cragniolina*), and laid it on his heart to practice it so that he will not forget it.<sup>31</sup>

However, we cannot speak of a widespread Slovene identity among the nobility on this basis. Slovene had, above all, a useful value for them – its value corresponded to its utility as the language they acquired during childhood and used it to communicate with their surroundings.<sup>32</sup> However, Slovene did not have a deeper significance at that time, as it would later during the period of national awakening. But even then, the nobles in Carniola generally did not recognize the potential and challenge posed by the new social conditions. Namely, we know only individual cases when nobles from the late eighteenth century onwards showed their support for the Slovene national awakening and encouraged the

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<sup>28</sup> Jernej (Bartholomew) Valvasor, the father of the famous polyhistor Janez Vajkard (Johann Weikhard), in his will in 1639 named his daughter Elizabeth with the Slovene diminutive Lizika (Boris Golec, *Valvasorji. Med vzponom, Slavo in zatonom* [The Valvasor family. From the rise to the Glory and decline] (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2015), 197). For the polyhistor himself it is believed that, while writing *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* [Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain], he thought in Slovene and translated it into German (Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 32).

<sup>29</sup> Joža Glonar, “Japelj, Jurij,” in *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi249855/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi249855/) (17.3.2021). Slovene original: *Zato se naj splošno uvede praksa, ki velja že od nekdaj v tržaškem in kranjskem plemstvu, da se naj otroci že v nežni mladosti od slovenskih služkinj naučijo njih jezika in postanejo tako dvojezični*.

<sup>30</sup> Karel Mihael Attems, *Slovenske pridige* (za prvo objavo pripravila in s spremnimi besedili opremila Lojzka Bratuž) [Slovene sermons (edited by Lojzka Bratuž)] (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 1993); Lojzka Bratuž, “Slovenščina v goriških plemiških rodbinah,” [The Slovene among the noble families in Gorizia] in *Koledar za leto 2001* (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 2000), 70–71.

<sup>31</sup> Bratuž, “Slovenščina,” 71–72.

<sup>32</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 33.

development of the Slovene language and culture. In this context, the famous Baron Žiga (Sigmund) Zois (1747–1819) and his circle, from which the leading Slovene awakeners of that time emerged, e.g., poet Valentin Vodnik, Slavist Jernej Kopitar, or Bible translator Jurij Japelj, should definitely be mentioned in the first place. Furthermore, in this context, we must mention Johann Nepomuk, Count Edling, who supported education in Slovene,<sup>33</sup> or Johann Jakob, Count Gaisruck, who was one of the supporters of the writer and historian Anton Tomaž Linhart – the latter dedicated the second part of his book *Attempt to the History of Carniola and Other Lands of Southern Slavs* to him.<sup>34</sup> An interesting but known only from the literature is the case of Count Alexander Auersperg (1770–1818), father of the poet Anastasius Grün, who supposedly had banners with the Slovene inscription “*Ljubimo cesarja dobriga Slovinci*” [We Slovenes should love the good emperor] hanged from the windows of his Ljubljana palace when the French left Carniola in 1813.<sup>35</sup> Josef Kalasanz, Baron Erberg (1771–1843), who collaborated with many members of the Slovene national awakening (gathered especially in the Zois circle), also showed his sympathy for the Slovene cultural movement, but did not actively participate in it.<sup>36</sup>

A little more tangible is the affection for the Slovene cause in Richard Count Ursini-Blagaj (1786–1858). He was held in high esteem by the local population in Polhov Gradec (Billichgraz) and was, after the abolition of feudalism in 1848, elected their first mayor, which was not an isolated case in Slovenia. From the position of mayor, he allegedly strongly advocated the official use of Slovene, which, like most of the Carniolan nobility, he probably mastered from childhood, but learned the Slovene grammar rules only in adulthood.<sup>37</sup> According to some information, his Slavophilism even went so far that, during the visit of the

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<sup>33</sup> Francè Kidrič, “Edling von Laussenbach, Janez Nepomuk Jakob,” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi178715/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi178715/). (17.3.2021).

<sup>34</sup> France Koblar, “Linhart, Anton Tomaž (1756–1795)”. *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi330432/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi330432/) (17.3.2021).

<sup>35</sup> Breda Požar, *Anastasius Grün in Slovenci* [Anastasius Grün and Slovenes] (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1970), 17; Igor Grdina, “Anastazij Zelenec ter slovenska in nemška (literarno) zgodovinska stvarnost,” [Anastasius Grün and Slovene and German (literary) historical reality] in *Med dolžnostjo spomina in razkošjem pozabe* [Between the duty of memory and luxury of oblivion], Igor Grdina (ed.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2006), 255. It is interesting that later his son Anton Alexander (1806–1876) was one of the leading and prominent Germans in Carniola, who, due to his glorification of Germanism at the expense of Slovenes, repeatedly came into conflict with some Slovene intellectuals and politicians.

<sup>36</sup> Kidrič, “Erberg, Jožef Kalasanc, baron (1771–1843),” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi182495/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi182495/) (17.3.2021).

<sup>37</sup> *Novice, gospodarske, obrtniške in narodne* 29, no. 39 (1871): 318. [www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:doc-AXZUHASE](http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:doc-AXZUHASE) (17.3.2021).

Emperor Francis Joseph to Ljubljana (probably in 1855), he hung lanterns on the windows of his apartment with the inscription in Slovene *Slava mu!* [Glory to him!]. When the imperial deputy reproached that to him, Blagaj allegedly replied: "Your Excellency, I am a Slav."<sup>38</sup>

Thus, if we draw the line – was there a Slovene nobility or merely the nobility in Slovenia? We can use the term "Slovene nobility", but only if we take into account the criterion of territorial affiliation. As stated in the introduction, Carniola and part of Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia were comprised by the territory of today's Slovenia. The nobility in these lands, although at first glance of Germanic character, closely, almost organically intertwined with the Slovene population. Therefore, when studying Slovene history, i.e., the history of a certain territory (taking into account the fact that the phrase "history of Slovenes" has long been surpassed) and all the phenomena that took place in this territory, it is necessary to include atypical Slovene phenomena, hence also the nobility. From this point of view, the former nobility in Slovenia can also be conditionally described as the Slovene nobility.

### **Social identity – there are many paths towards the peak**

For the nobility of the Early Modern Period, another form of identity was more important than the ethnic identity – the social one. This did not so much concern the old, so-called "ancient nobility" (*Uradel*), whose beginnings date back to the Middle Ages and are indeterminate. This form of identity or rather changes within it were more obvious in younger, ennobled families, which German historiography calls *Briefadel*, i.e., "nobility of the letter", as the beginning of their noble status was determined by a noble letter or noble diploma granted by the sovereign. Their self-awareness of the position in society gradually changed or was completely redefined.

When an individual, usually of bourgeois origin, received a certificate of ennoblement, he generally began to live in accordance with the new status. This also meant a change in his social identity. The new nobleman tried to adopt as much as possible the way of behaving consistent to the new status, abandoned old habits, and lived according to the other members of the nobility. This, among others, also meant that he ceased his former bourgeois activities, such as trade and crafts, and directed his capital to the purchase of landed property. The pursuit of a profession was not in accordance with the aristocratic ideal; the nobleman

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<sup>38</sup> Rudolf Andrejka, "Rihard grof Blagaj," [Count Rihard Blagaj]. *Planinski vestnik* 40, 5 (1940): 6–13, 9.

was supposed to live on the land rent and not on the work of his hands. Thus, the ennobled became real feudal lords and real nobles, which included concluding marriage agreements with other nobles.

Several dozens of such cases are known in central Slovene territory. Among the most famous are the Zois and Codelli families (initially merchants, but eventually full-blooded barons), but a lesser-known Wizenstein family can also be mentioned as one of the typical representatives of this practice. The first members of the Wiz family (also Wüz), who most likely came from the German lands, were first mentioned in Ljubljana in the second half of the sixteenth century. Undoubtedly, the most prominent among them was Marcus Wiz († 1654), who inherited a wine shop towards the end of the sixteenth century, and soon began to trade in wine and grain, thus gaining a large fortune. As a wealthy and respectable burgher, he became a member of the inner-city council and served in it as a senior city treasurer, being also repeatedly elected city judge and mayor. In 1630, Emperor Ferdinand II elevated him to a hereditary noble status and thus enabled the meteoric rise of the family. Marcus's older son Karl († 1672) took advantage of the new status, and, in 1635, he was appointed as a mining judge for Carniola and Gorizia. Then, in 1646, the emperor extended his family name Wiz with the predicate Wizenstein and improved his coat of arms. Two decades later, Karl rose a step higher in the noble society – he became a baron. During this time, he bought quite a few manors and castles. Thus, he went from being a merchant's son to a landowner and a member of the Carniolan provincial estates. Karl's descendants were already able to marry members of old and prominent Carniolan families, such as Counts Ursini-Blagaj and Hohenwart, but the family became extinct in the middle of the eighteenth century due to a lack of male descendants.<sup>39</sup>

However, access to this kind of social rise was not restricted to "foreigners" and immigrants. It was also a characteristic of many domestic, Slovene families. One of the most famous examples is the Slovene Oblak family from the town of Škofja Loka (Bischofslack). The beginning of its noble branch can be traced to Marko (Marcus) Oblak († 1709), whose ancestors originated from the rural surroundings of Škofja Loka. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Marko settled in the town, took up trading with iron and linen and bought a house in the town. In the 1680s, he was repeatedly elected as a town judge in Škofja Loka, which shows the great reputation he enjoyed with his townspeople. As town judge, he often had to deal with military accommodation in the

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<sup>39</sup> On the Wizenstein family, see Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 183–191.

town, and for several years he also took over the management of the town hospital. His reputation and great wealth enabled him to rise on the social ladder – in 1688 the peasant's son became a nobleman with the predicate "von Wolkenberg and Ziegelfeld". To the noble title also belonged the noble estate and the new nobleman Marko Oblak von Wolkenberg had enough resources to secure this as well. He bought several seigneuries and turned them into fideicommissum. Extensive possessions and family ties with other prominent Carniolan families enabled Marcus's grandson Franz Anton (1700–1764) to rise to the rank of baron in 1753. The original Slovene name Oblak had long since been lost, alluded to only by a cloud in the coat of arms of the Wolkenberg barons [*oblak* (Slovenian) = *die Wolke* (German)].<sup>40</sup>

In some other cases, the opposite applied – a burgher would buy a seignury inscribed in the provincial land registry (*Landtafel*), which would then enable him to become first a member of the provincial estates and consequently also of the nobility. It often happened that the provincial estates approved such a purchase "on credit", that is, they allowed the purchase, but the new owner had to promise to apply for a noble title. Such cases were more common especially from the second half of the eighteenth century, when the slow decline of the old, classical nobility had already begun, and land tenure could be obtained more easily.

A typical example of such a practice was Janez Pavel Jenko († 1791) from Škofja Loka. He was first the manager of the Otočec (Wördl) seignury for 12 years and then a bank customs officer in Novo mesto (Rudolfswerth) for ten years. In 1755, he bought the Mirna (Neudegg) seignury at auction together with Johann Ludwig Asch. This purchase was one of the main reasons why Jenko asked to be elevated to the nobility, and his request was also actively supported by the Carniolan estates. In this context, it is understandable that Jenko emphasized in his request that the seignury of Mirna before him already belonged to the nobles – first, to Count Lamberg and then to Baron Gall. Empress Maria Theresa granted his request and in 1762 Jenko became noble. Four years later, he bought his share from co-owner Asch and thus became the sole owner of Mirna seignury. Immediately after that he applied for an even higher noble rank – a knighthood with the predicate Jenkensfeld. This request was also granted by the Empress.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Oblackh v. Wolkenberg, Franz Johann Anton, 14. VIII. 1753. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 192–205.

<sup>41</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenko, Johann Paul, 19. IV. 1762; Hofadelsakte von Jenčo, Johann Paul, 26. IV. 1773; see also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 73–76.

In such cases, it would be difficult to argue that the commoners were forced to acquire noble status. Quite the opposite: for the most part, non-nobles aspired to noble status, and it was the acquisition of noble property that enabled or merely accelerated this process. In any case, we can say that the change of social identity began even before the formal change of social status, i.e., before the elevation to noble status. The ownership of the landed estate and the associated castle building were undoubtedly the catalyst for such changes.

Wealthy burghers who “decorated” themselves with noble titles were often not elevated to the nobility “from scratch”. This is especially true of merchants from the Italian area, who immigrated *en masse* to Carniola in the seventeenth century. Many of them were considered to have brought some form of noble status with them, but they usually did not use it when they arrived in the Habsburg lands – they either gave it up (at least temporarily and seemingly) because their bourgeois business (at least in earlier periods) was incompatible with the noble title, or it was initially not recognized by the ruler. It was only later, after having acquired a large fortune, purchased the property, and thus became landlords, that the ruler elevated them among the nobility of the Holy Roman Empire; in their diplomas of nobility there is often a formulation that the ruler confirms (!) to them their (old) noble title and coat of arms. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the descendants of Vincenzo Baz/Waz (originally from Bergamo), for example, tried to prove their old Italian noble status in the application for the Austrian noble title; the supposedly noble ancestors were also referred to by the above-mentioned doctor from Novo mesto, Franc Ksaver Zalokar. The Jabornegg family (actually Javornik) from Tržič (Neumarktl), granted with the predicate Altenfels in 1787, cultivated the tradition that they originated from the baronial Carinthian family Jabornegg von Gamseneck. Another case is Franc (Franz) Prešeren from Brezovica (near Ljubljana), who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, made every effort to prove his connection with the ennobled and by then considered extinct Preschern-Heldenfeldt family. After lengthy and highly dubious argumentation, this connection was finally confirmed to him in 1861, although today’s research shows that it was wrong.<sup>42</sup>

However, not all the ennobled burghers decided to pass among the feudal lords. They often refused to give up lucrative bourgeois activities, which inevitably led to conflicts with other townspeople. Thus,

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<sup>42</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Preschern, Johann Baptist, 10. VI. 1724; Hofadelsakte von Preschern, Franz, 9. III. 1861. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 115–124.

they sat on two chairs: on the one hand, they continued to engage in bourgeois business, and on the other hand, as nobles, they did so in much more favourable conditions than other companions without *von* before the surname. Namely, they eschewed bourgeois duties such as paying certain taxes or the obligation of guardianship and trusteeship over other townspeople, and at the same time, they enjoyed all the benefits of the noble status.

Some, however, simply did not know or did not want to abandon previous patterns of behaviour and social action. Even generations after obtaining the noble title, they were still engaged in bourgeois affairs participated in the city self-government, and did not look for marriage partners among the nobility, but rather in other bourgeois families. In this case, we can only talk of ennobles *de jure* and not of real nobles.

We can take a look, for example, at the Zanetti family, who came to Carniola from Venice. One of its members, Antonio († 1691), who settled in the area of Škofja Loka as a merchant in the 1630s, ran a successful trade between Carniola and Venice. Other Škofja Loka merchants were not too enthusiastic about him and his family; they objected when Antonio's son Bartolomeo applied for the citizenship of Škofja Loka, but their opposition was unsuccessful. The dissatisfaction of the competitors did not stop the enterprising Zanettis. To make it easier and devote himself to his business unhindered, Antonio asked to be elevated to nobility. Noble status brought the nobleman, among other things, a change in jurisdiction – the ennobled townspeople were no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the city court, but of the noble court. Zanetti probably also counted on that. The emperor was well disposed to Zanetti's request, probably all the more so because the Zanetti's economic success also benefited to the imperial treasury – according to Zanetti's own words, 25,000 florins flowed into it from his purse every year. The emperor granted Antonio's request and in 1661 elevated him and all his descendants to the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>43</sup>

The described examples show that the reasons for acquiring a noble title in the Modern Age were not unequivocal. For some, elevation to noble status meant the ultimate goal of social rise, for others it was merely a means to achieve other goals.

An increasing number of noble families opens up the question of their coexistence with old families, which enjoyed a much greater reputation in the society due to their noble status acquired on the basis of knightly ideals. Therefore, for the latter, possible kinship with the

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<sup>43</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Zanetti, Anton, 19. IV. 1661. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 17. stoletje, 206–212.

“nobility of money” (might have) meant a kind of social degradation. The means that erased the boundaries between the various strata within the heterogeneous noble society was primarily money. The new nobility usually had it in abundance. The old one was usually in constant financial embarrassment. That is why old families often had to swallow their pride and adapt. Those who were not prepared to do so perished sooner or later. Pragmatism in marriage thus paid off for all: it allowed the newly ennobled to penetrate and anchor themselves in the social elite (which accelerated the shifts within their changing social identity), and to the old and established nobility such alliances brought financial injections and rejuvenation of family genetic material.

One of the most famous examples in this respect was the Auersperg-Trillegg couple. In 1669, Count Wolf Engelbert Auersperg (1641–1709), a member of one of the oldest and most prominent noble families in Carniola, and Katharina Elisabetha Baroness Trilleg († 1724), whose family had only been ennobled two generations before, were married. The bride’s father, Georg Andreas Trillegg, died early († 1667). Both his son, Georg Andreas Jr. (1663–1701), and his daughter, Katharina Elisabetha, were after taken care of by their uncle Johann Friedrich Trillegg, who proved to be a good guardian: among other things, in 1674 he achieved the elevation to the rank of counts for himself and his nephew, and he also arranged eminent wedding parties for both of his protégés; family property played a decisive role in this.<sup>44</sup> Katharina Elisabetha, as mentioned, became the wife of Count Wolf Engelbert Auersperg in 1669, and her brother married Susanna Felicitas, Countess of Gallenberg, who also belonged to the top of the Carniolan elite. However, if the marriage of the newlywed Countess Auersperg was relatively happy and harmonious, the marriage of her brother, in which only one daughter was born, was the complete opposite. Georg Andreas Jr. and Susanna Felicitas soon became estranged, and their mutual dislike eventually grew into a real hatred, which ended in 1693 with a resounding divorce and an attempt to confiscate Trillegg’s property in favour of the Gallenbergs.<sup>45</sup>

If the marriage between Count Auersperg and the *parvenu* Trilleg was accepted in the then high society of Carniola without major objections (and undoubtedly the Trillegg-Gallenberg union would have been too, had there been no divorce scandal), there was much more opposition in some other cases. When Baron Marcus Anton III of

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<sup>44</sup> Preinfalk, *Auersperg. Geschichte einer europäischen Familie* (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 2006), 114–115. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 165–172.

<sup>45</sup> On the divorce, see Maja Žvanut, “Ločitev zakona pred tristo leti” [A divorce three hundred years ago], *Zgodovinski časopis* 50, no. 3 (1996): 343–356.



Billichgrätz (1713–1789) was looking for a spouse in the 1730s, he proposed initially to a certain Countess Lamberg, but this union failed because of his dispute with the future father-in-law over the marriage contract. His second choice was Maria Rosalia von Qualiza, who was from an otherwise rich, but, in the aristocratic tradition, a young noble family (the nobility was only granted to Rosalia's grandfather Nikolaj in 1642). This time, Marcus Anton's choice was opposed by his mother, Maria Eleonora, as the bride did not seem respectable enough. It is interesting that the same mother, by birth Countess Ursini Blagaj (the Blagajs belonged to the old and respectable families), had agreed to marry Marcus Anton II Billichgrätz (1673–1731), who was only the second generation of nobles (the nobility was granted only to his father Mark Anton I (1636–1693) in 1646). The wedding took place, despite the mother's opposition, and the rich bride Qualiza brought her fiancé Billichgrätz a huge dowry.<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, a few years later, their eldest daughter Johanna Baroness Billichgrätz (1737–1787), who caught an eye of Dismas, Count Barbo-Waxenstein (1737–1802), also had similar problems with the chosen one. The groom's father, Jobst Weikhard, Count Barbo, strongly opposed his son's choice for the same reasons that were relevant in the case of the bride's parents – the son's chosen one, although a baroness, was not respectable enough, as her family was granted the nobility for money, not for chivalrous merit. The father did his best to prevent the marriage, addressing both the provincial authorities and the empress Maria Theresa herself. The final decision was made by the church authorities – the apostolic nuncio finally allowed the marriage, and Count Dismas Barbo and Baroness Johanna Billichgrätz became "Carniolan proto-romantic love revolutionaries."<sup>47</sup>

The society (or at least some individuals in it) was therefore not consistent in condemning all the deviations from the established rules. Some unequal relationships were considered acceptable or at least seemingly unproblematic, while others were not. That is why the social identity of the new, *parvenu* nobles was all the more important, as one could only count on full integration into the noble society by fully adopting the patterns and rules of aristocratic behaviour.

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<sup>46</sup> Dušan Kos, *Zgodovina morale. 1. del. Ljubezen in zakonska zveza na Slovenskem med srednjim vekom in meščansko dobo* [The history of the morality. Vol. 1. Love and marriage in Slovenia between the Middle Ages and bourgeoisie period] (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2015), 254; Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 13–14.

<sup>47</sup> Kos, *Zgodovina morale*, 253–269; Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 16. stoletje. 1. del: Od Barbov do Zetscherjev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 16th century. Vol. 1: From Barbo to Zetscher] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2016), 33.

Numerous examples of different practices, both in the national and social perspective, thus show that the nobility was far from homogeneous, but rather very diverse and stratified.

### **Nobility after 1848 – national antagonisms become strained**

If, until the mid-nineteenth century, the concord between different ethnic groups still prevailed in Slovenia, the situation deteriorated sharply after 1848. At that time, as the national frictions began to intensify, real fights took place between Slovenes and Germans, especially in Carniola, as well as in southern Styria and southern Carinthia, where enough Slovenes lived to be a suitable counterweight to the German population. This was also reflected in the fact that the Slovenes who joined the German camp Germanized their name and identified with the German culture. In Carniola, for example, one of the most famous examples was the curator of the Carniola Provincial Museum, Dragotin Dežman, who became Karl Deschmann after joining the German side.<sup>48</sup> In Lower Styria, the case of the leather-industry family Vošnjak from Šoštanj (Schönstein) was notorious, which split into the Slovene and German branches – the members of the first signed themselves in Slovene as Vošnjak, and the members of the second in German as Woschnagg.<sup>49</sup>

This development did not bypass even the nobility, which responded to the new situation in different ways. The old, basically still feudal nobility, as a rule, did not engage in national struggles, although it mostly showed affiliation with the German side. Extremely rare were the individuals from the ranks of the old nobility who sided with the Slovenes or even declared themselves Slovenes. If such cases did occur, they were generally limited only to individuals within one family. One of the most prominent examples in this sense was Josef Emanuel, Count Barbo-Waxenstein from Lower Carniola (1825–1879), who publicly declared himself a Slovene and a Slovene count at that. Nonetheless, this only lasted until his death, when his descendants returned to the German side.<sup>50</sup>

Gustav Count Thurn-Valsassina (1836–1888) from Radovljica (Radmannsdorf) was also a member of the old Austrian nobility representing Slovene interests. His pro-Slovene orientation was the result of the upbringing enabled to him by his father Vincenc (1790–1859). Namely, the latter provided the children with teachers who were not only

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<sup>48</sup> Avgust Pirjevec, "Karel Dežman," *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi172598/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi172598/) (17.3.2021).

<sup>49</sup> Miran Aplinc, *Vošnjaki: industrialci iz Šoštanja* [The Vošnjak family: industrials from Šoštanj] (Šoštanj: Zavod za kulturo, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 16. stoletje, 36.

Slovenes by birth, but also ardent national awakeners.<sup>51</sup> In the words of his compatriot and diplomat Josef Schwegel, Gustav Thurn “swung politically uncertainly between Germans and Slovenes,”<sup>52</sup> but the Slovene camp considered him its own, so the Carniolan Provincial Assembly published an obituary in Slovene at his death in 1888.<sup>53</sup>

Among the Slovene-defined or at least Slovene-friendly high nobles, worth-mentioning is also Baron Anton Zois (1808–1873), grandnephew of Žiga Zois, who supported Slovene national societies, like *Narodna čitalnica* [National reading society] and *Slovenska matica* [Slovene literary society]. When he died, the Slovene epitaph was composed for his tombstone by Janez Bleiweis (1808–1881), one of the most prominent leaders of the Slovene national movement.<sup>54</sup> In the County of Gorizia, two counts of Coronini supported the pro-Slavic side. The elder among them was Franz (1833–1901), who introduced the Slovene official language as the mayor of Šempeter and, as a state deputy, had a lot of credit for introducing the Slovene and Italian languages into secondary education in the County of Gorizia. Even more pro-Slovene was Alfred Coronini (1846–1910), who became involved in the political activity of Slovenes in the County of Gorizia and joined the political society “Sloga” [Unity], with whose help was then elected to the Vienna State and Gorizia Provincial Assemblies. As an MP, he supported the demands for public and equal use of the Slovene language, Slovene education, the economic rise of the Slovene countryside, and the regulation of transport connections, especially for the construction of the Vipava railway.<sup>55</sup>

Slightly more complicated was the picture for the new nobility, in which ethnic identity was strongly intertwined with social mobility. In order to identify as much as possible with the nobility or with higher society in general, within which German culture predominated (as already mentioned above), the newly ennobled usually completely transferred to the German side and adopted German culture and identity.

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<sup>51</sup> Granda, “Radovljica v letu 1848,” [Radovljica in 1848] in *Radovljčki zbornik* 1995, Jure Sinobad (ed.) (Radovljica: Občina Radovljica, 1995), 149–150.

<sup>52</sup> Josef Schwegel, *Na cesarjev ukaz. Spomini politika in diplomata* [At the Emperor's command. Memories of a politician and a diplomat], Franc Rozman (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2004), 131.

<sup>53</sup> Preinfalk, “Radovljica in grofje Thurn-Valsassina,” [Radovljica and the Counts Thurn-Valsassina] in *Anton Tomaž Linhart: jubilejna monografija ob 250-letnici rojstva*, Ivo Svetina (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenski gledališki muzej; Radovljica: Muzeji radovljiške občine, 2005), 520.

<sup>54</sup> Preinfalk, “Genealoška podoba rodbine Zois od 18. do 20. stoletja,” [Genealogical image of the Zois family between the 18th and the 20th centuries] *Kronika* 51, 1 (2003): 34, 45.

<sup>55</sup> Vojko Pavlin, “Coronini,” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/rodbina/sbi1005500/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/rodbina/sbi1005500/) (17.3.2021).

Of course, this was not always the case. There are a few known cases when the new nobles still retained their Slovene character, e.g., the already mentioned Janez Bleiweis, Fran Šuklje (1849–1935), and Jožef Pogačnik (1866–1932), who were among the bearers of the Slovene national movement.

Already a cursory glance at the new nobility from Slovenia reveals a whole range of various orientations and combinations. Here lived Slovenes who supported the German side, Germans who supported the Slovene side, and of course Germans who firmly defended German cause, as well as Slovenes who were ardent nationalists.

We must note that the noble title could have had a strong political connotation. Many individuals, despite fulfilling the conditions, never applied for it. This resistance was mostly connected with the pro-Slovene or rather anti-Austrian national consciousness. For example, politician Josip Sernec (1844–1925), despite being granted the order of the Iron Crown III, which would have allowed him to ask for a hereditary noble title, never made an application, saying that “as a Slovene, I cannot and must not accept any gift from our hostile ministry and I do not allow myself to be silenced with it.”<sup>56</sup>

The national camp, to which some of the new noblemen belonged or with which they identified, expressed itself in several ways. Among the indicators were the form of the surname and the choice of expressing their noble predicate (German or Slovene), although in the complex national conditions of the last decades of the Habsburg Monarchy this was not always decisive. For example, the lawyer Andrej Lušin (1807–1879), who was closer to the German side, consistently signed himself as Luschin and, when elevated to the nobility in 1873, chose the German predicate Ebengreuth.<sup>57</sup> A slightly younger lawyer, Franc Kočevar (1833–1897), did the same. At first, he became enthusiastic about the “Slovene cause”, but he eventually realized that by sticking to it as a civil servant was not as fruitful as he imagined. Thus, he completely surrendered to the German cause, in which he also raised his children. When he was ennobled as the president of the provincial court in Ljubljana in 1895, he chose the German predicate Kondenheim, which he derived from his wife’s maiden surname Konda. Nevertheless, interestingly enough, he

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<sup>56</sup> Josip Sernec, *Spomini* [Memoires] (Ljubljana: Komisijška založba Tiskovne zadruga, 1927). Slovene original: ...*da kot Slovenec ne morem in ne smem sprejeti od nam sovražnega ministrstva nobenega darila ter si ne dam ž njim mašiti ust.*

<sup>57</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Luschin, Andreas, 22. VI. 1873. See also Mariano Rugále, Miha Preinfalk, *Blagoslovljeni in prekleti. 2. del: Po sledih mlajših plemiških rodbin na Slovenskem* [The blessed and the cursed, Vol. 1: On the traces of younger noble families in Slovenia] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2012), 127–134.

always used the Slovene notation of his surname, i.e., Kočevar, and his descendants, who left the Slovene territory at the beginning of the twentieth century, adapted the surname to German only by omitting the caron over the letter č, but did not replace it by the German "tsch".<sup>58</sup>

The nobles who belonged to the Slovene camp also showed their affiliation by choosing the Slovene predicate. For example, Janez Bleiweis, one of the leaders of the Slovene national movement, became a knight "of Trsteniški" in the year of his death; patron Josip Gorup (1834–1912) "decorated" himself with the predicate Slavinski in 1903 (after his native village of Slavina); Jožef Tomše (1850–1937), chose the predicate Savskidol in 1907, which referred to a toponym in the village where he grew up.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas all Slovene surnames were usually written in the Bohorič alphabet before the introduction of Gaj's Latin alphabet, from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards the choice of the surname record could also have been an indicator of national orientation. Those who were closer to the German camp or lived in a predominantly German environment decided to write their Slovene surname in German (e.g., diplomat Jožef Schwegel) or insisted on the Bohorič alphabet (e.g., doctor Janez Zhuber or lawyer Jožef Zhisman). Others, more Slovene-oriented, consistently used Gaj's Latin alphabet and carons. Retired Colonel Jernej Aljančič (1853–1926) from Tržič, for example, in his request for elevation into nobility in 1917, emphasized that his surname was written down in the registry book with the Bohorič alphabet (i.e., Aljanzhizh), but demanded that the Gaj's Latin alphabet be used in the diploma of nobility (therefore, Aljančič), since he always signed exclusively in this way and was also registered under this form in military documents. Aljančič's Slovene orientation is also shown by his coat of arms, in which the Slovene national colours are used – blue, red and silver/white.<sup>60</sup> A similar reason can be found in the request for noble title of the retired Major Anton Gajšek from Slovenske Konjice in 1902; in addition to that, he also chose a Slovene predicate – Sotladol (after the river Sotla).<sup>61</sup> The carons in the surname are

<sup>58</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Kočevar, Franz, 11. V. 1895. See also Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslooljeni in prekleti* 2, 78–83.

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslooljeni in prekleti*. 1. del: *Plemiške rodbine* 19. in 20. stoletja na Slovenskem [The blessed and the cursed, Vol. 1: Noble families of the 19th and the 20th centuries in Slovenia] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2010), 21–28, 70–77, 188–192.

<sup>60</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte für Aljančič Bartholomäus, 30. XI. 1917. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem*, 19. in 20. stoletje. 3. del: *Od Aljančičev do Žolgerjev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 19th and 20th centuries, Vol. 3: From Aljančič to Žolger] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2017), 9–12.

<sup>61</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Gajšek, Anton, 29. IV. 1902. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 19. in 20. stoletje, 75–78.

also used in the diplomas of nobility of some prominent and conscious Slovenes who were awarded the noble title by the emperor, e.g., Fran Šuklje, Josip Pogačnik, Anton Globočnik, Albert Levičnik, to name a few.

Even if the Slovene spelling of surnames was usually followed by Slovene noble predicates and the German forms of surnames were supplemented with German predicates, other combinations are also known. Some individuals wrote their surname in Slovene, but still chose a German predicate. In addition to the aforementioned Franc Kočevar-Kondenheim, two Austrian officers of Slovene descent can be mentioned, namely Jožef Kremžar from Ljubljana (1869–1927), who became noble of Felskampff,<sup>62</sup> or Jožef Supančič from Novo mesto (1850–1927), who was from 1897 noble of Kroisenau. Both of them proposed several predicates, all of which were German for Kremžar, whereas a Slovene one – *Domoljub* [patriot] was also found for Supančič.<sup>63</sup>

However, there is the well-known example of the Ljubljana physician Janez Zhuber (1790–1865), who always insisted on the use of Bohorič alphabet for his surname (and also all his descendants to this day) but at the same time chose the Slovene predicate Okrog. It is true that it was a microtoponym from the vicinity of his home village in Lower Carniola, but he could have also chosen a more German-sounding predicate.<sup>64</sup>

The described examples show that ethnicity and national definition were much more complicated than they seem at first glance or as the discourse in Slovenia in the past liked to simplify. However, we can conditionally conclude that the choice of Slovene predicate and Slovene surname spelling almost always emphasized belonging to the Slovene side, while the German orthography did not necessarily mean unconditional adherence to the Germans or apostasy from the Slovenes.

An individual's national affiliation could also be expressed by choosing a coat of arms. If the applicant for the nobility chose the blue Carniolan eagle as his coat of arms, he was showing his national or provincial patriotism (e.g., businessman Josip Gorup, lawyer Anton Globočnik). The black eagle represented allegiance to the Habsburg monarchy (e.g., provincial school inspector Anton Klodič), while the most Slovene-oriented chose the linden motif as a symbol of Slovenes (e.g., major General Janez Lavrič, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies

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<sup>62</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Kremžar, Josef, 22. X. 1918. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 19. in 20. stoletje, 111–115.

<sup>63</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Supančič, Josef, 18. XII. 1897. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 19. in 20. stoletje, 209–212.

<sup>64</sup> AT ÖStA, AVHKA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Zhuber, Johann, 2. III. 1865. See also Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslovljeni in prekleti* 1, 220–231.

Jožef Pogačnik) or even the white-blue-red combination (e.g., Janez Bleiweis, colonel Jernej Aljančič). In the nineteenth century, belonging to the Slovene side and devotion to the monarchy and the Habsburgs were not necessarily exclusive.

The complex relationship between the Austrian (German) nobility and the Slovenes was beautifully summarized by Robert Count Barbo-Waxenstein (1889–1977) in his semi-autobiographical novel *The White Ball* from the 1930s. He also mentioned his grandfather Josef Emanuel, Count Barbo, although he did not mention him by name:

“They [= the nobility], however, led only when their skin was in danger, such as during the Turkish invasions. Otherwise, they lived until the year 1848 luxuriously from peasant socage, and on top of that they became German national. Instead of representing the rural people, they prefer German towns, which foolishly imagined that they would Germanize the country. In this way, the nobility, of course, had to lose all confidence in the population. In the 1860s, there was only one who understood the situation correctly and stood up for the benefit of the Slovene people – more for his sense of justice than for his political instincts. As a result, however, his short-sighted peers visibly despised him. If they had followed his example, it would have been a completely different situation today with the Slovene people and the provincial nobility. And so, it seems to me, both are failing. In a hundred years, only the castle ruins will stand above the poor country and will testify to our former greatness, which we did not know how to use for our own good and for the good of the people, because we did not know how to merge with it in one.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Barbo-Waxenstein, *Bela krogla* [The white ball] (Ljubljana: Satura, 1935), 167. Slovene original: *Ono pa je vodilo samo takrat, če je bila njegova koža v nevarnosti, kakor na primer za časa turških vpadov. Drugače pa je živel do leta 48. razkošno od kmečke tlake, povrh pa je še postalo nemško nacionalno. Namesto da bi zastopalo podeželsko ljudstvo, je rajši nemška mesteca, ki so si bedasto domišljala, da bodo deželo ponemčila. Na ta način je moralo plemstvo seveda izgubiti v prebivalstvu sleherni zaupanje. Eden edini je v 60. letih pravilno spoznal položaj in se postavil manj po svojem političnem nagonu kakor po pravičnostnem čutu za korist slovenskega ljudstva. Zato so ga pa kratkovidni staležni tovariši vidno zaničevali. Če bi bili posnemali njegov primer, bi bilo danes s slovenskim ljudstvom in deželnim plemstvom čisto drugače. Tako pa, se mi zdi, prepadata oba. Čez sto let bodo stale samo še grajske razvaline nad siromašno deželo in bodo pričale o naši nekdanji veličini, ki je nismo znali uporabiti v svoje dobro in v dobro ljudstva, ker se nismo znali v svoji domišljivosti spojiti z njim v eno.*

This passage shows that in the Slovene territory the nobility was aware of the gap between itself and the majority Slovene population and recognized the missed opportunity in bringing the two sides closer.

Moreover, in the field of social identity, the second half of the nineteenth century brought great and fatal changes. In this respect, the nobility in Carniola or in Slovenia did not differ significantly from the nobility elsewhere in the Habsburg Monarchy. The nobility had long since set foot on the path of slow decline. Ever since the end of the Middle Ages, the ruler, in his absolutist aspirations, had tried to limit the power of the aristocratic corporation as much as possible. One of the highlights of this antagonism was the Reformation, in which the nobility took the lead, and the counter-Reformation, in which the scales shifted in favour of the ruler or provincial prince. Maria Theresa and Joseph II brought new blows to the nobility with their reforms. The bourgeoisie also contributed, pushing the nobility more and more into the background with its growing power and influence. The revolution of 1848, also called the bourgeois revolution, almost completely abolished aristocratic privileges, which were still based on the medieval feudal system. Afterwards, the nobility was left with only the right to use the noble title and coat of arms. At the same time, on almost all levels, the bourgeoisie began to assume high positions that had previously been reserved solely for the nobility.<sup>66</sup>

After 1848, the nobility entered the last stage of its decline – financial, social, political, and even demographical. The significant reduction of the former feudal estate and the abolition of feudal relations meant impoverishment for them: nobles increasingly decided to sell property and move out of castles, stepped into the background in society, became invisible, did not engage politically, except those who managed to retain a notable estate and represented it in the provincial assemblies; additionally, many nobles remained single and did not continue their lineage, while numerous noblewomen married burghers and merged with this environment. If, until the nineteenth century, the new nobles tried to imitate the old aristocratic society as much as possible and integrate into it, this was no longer the case. Many simply could not afford it financially, and many did not even want it; due to the inflation of elevations into the nobility, the old aristocratic, so-called first society (*die erste Gesellschaft*) rejected the new nobles, calling them “second society” (*die zweite Gesellschaft*), so that the gap between them was growing. The nobles thus largely retained their former way of life, their former identity,

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<sup>66</sup> See in particular the articles of Hannes Stekl collected in the book *Adel und Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Ernst Bruckmüller – Franz Eder – Andrea Schnöller (eds.) (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004).



but the differences between them and the bourgeoisie were almost no longer noticeable.<sup>67</sup>

### **Conclusion – the last 30 years of nobility in Slovenia**

Thus, if we draw a line under the turbulent events of the second half of the nineteenth century, we may conclude that the aforementioned period brought significant changes in the field of both ethnic and social identity of the nobility. This was a time of emergence and intensification of national antagonisms throughout the Habsburg monarchy, which was especially evident in ethnically mixed lands, as it was the case for the Inner Austrian lands. This development could not be avoided even by the nobility, although different strata of the nobility reacted distinctively. The old, basically feudal nobility, in principle, tried to avoid such divisions, emphasizing their supranationality,<sup>68</sup> but if they were forced to define themselves, they usually opted for the German side. The new nobility, who came from the ranks of officers or clerks, also predominantly belonged to the German camp. At least in Slovenia, the nobility mostly did not identify with the Slovene side and therefore became increasingly alienated from it. This proved fatal especially after both the world wars. After 1918, a large part of the lower nobility in particular emigrated from the new Yugoslav kingdom. Those who remained were mainly those aristocratic families who had lived there for centuries and considered this area to be their homeland. Most of them, despite the agrarian reform, still owned extensive holdings, which discouraged them from going abroad too. Although it was mostly defined as German and perceived as such by the surroundings, the nobility gradually approached and adapted to the Slovene environment, which was reflected in the public use of the Slovene language, enrolment of noble children in Slovene schools and, last, but not least, accepting of the Yugoslav citizenship.

Nevertheless, the (old) nobility still insisted on the old way of life, on the old identity, even after the First World War, when the titles of nobility were formally abolished. Despite the fact that the life of the nobility could not be the same as before 1918, the nobles still tried to live in the traditional spirit. Habits from centuries-old tradition could not disappear overnight. They still lived in country mansions and/or city palaces, and they still visited each other exclusively and socialized while hunting, which has always been considered a lordly activity. Of course, in accordance with the reduced financial resources, they had to give up

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Count Leopold Berchtold (1863–1942) when asked in 1909 whether he was German, Hungarian, or Czech, he replied that he was an aristocrat (Grdina, “Anastazij Zelenec,” 247).

some expensive habits, such as long trips abroad or the maintenance of several dwellings, but the main features of the aristocratic everyday life remained.<sup>69</sup>

This development was brought to an end by the Second World War. The post-war communist authorities declared all members of the former nobility to be of German nationality, confiscated their property and, despite numerous complaints, expelled almost all of them from the country.<sup>70</sup> The Second World War and the period after it finally ended the nobility and the aristocratic life in Slovenia.

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<sup>69</sup> Wiesflecker, ""Das ist jetzt unsere Ordnung!"" 195–246.

<sup>70</sup> For more on that see Preinfalk, "The Second World War and the nobility in Slovenia," *Slovene studies: journal of the Society for Slovene Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2021): 3–23.

# Mutual Images of Romanians and Hungarians in Proverbs Collected in the Nineteenth Century

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes Romanian and Hungarian proverbs collected in the nineteenth century that convey images of the Other. These were published mostly in the masive collections of proverbs, sayings, and riddles edited by András Dugonics, Ede Margalits, and Iuliu Zanne. Proverbs speak first of all about the differences between “us” and “them,” about the negative traits of those around us, by which we identify ourselves and which highlight our superiority and “normality” in relation to dangerous and peculiar strangers around us. Peasants did not reflect on their neighbours in order to outline an objective portrait of them, but to display and reinforce their own cultural features, setting themselves apart from the strangers surrounding them. For this reason, they usually mocked and did not praise the Other. Mockery and ridicule were much more common than positive assessments, regardless of whether the relations between the two communities were good or bad. In this general framework, the popular images of the two peasant communities were agreeable and conveyed a sense of closeness and familiarity rather than a high degree of otherness, as was the case with the imagological relationships maintained with the Gypsies or the Jews.

**Keywords:** Romanians, Hungarians, proverbs, nineteenth century, historical imagology

**Rezumat:** Acest articol analizează proverbe româneşti şi maghiare culese în secolul al XIX-lea care transmit imagini ale celui alt. Acestea au fost publicate în mare parte în colecţiile masive de proverbe, zicători şi ghicitori editate de András Dugonics, Ede Margalits şi Iuliu Zanne. Proverbele vorbesc în primul rând despre diferenţele dintre „noi” şi „ei”, despre trăsăturile negative ale celor

din jurul nostru, prin care ne identificăm și care ne evidențiază superioritatea și „normalitatea” în raport cu străinii periculoși și ciudați din jurul nostru. Țăranii nu reflectau asupra vecinilor lor pentru a contura un portret obiectiv al acestora, ci pentru a-și etala și întări propriile trăsături culturale, deosebindu-se de străinii din jurul lor. Din acest motiv, de obicei i-au batjocorit și nu l-au lăudat pe Celălalt. Batjocura și ridicolul erau mult mai frecvente decât aprecierile pozitive, indiferent dacă relațiile dintre cele două comunități erau bune sau rele. În acest cadru general, imaginile populare ale celor două comunități țărănești erau agreabile și transmiteau un sentiment de apropiere și familiaritate mai degrabă decât un grad ridicat de alteritate, așa cum era cazul relațiilor imagologice întreținute cu țigani sau cu evreii.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Români, Maghiari, proverbe, secolul al XIX-lea, imagologie istorică

Folklore sources express the mentality of entire communities, because, as they say, they spread information from mouth to mouth, disseminating it over large spaces and over long periods. But in the latter regard, historians are very cautious. The ballad *Miorița*, for example, certainly reflects older conceptions, states of affairs, and beliefs, which probably date back to the Middle Ages. But how old are they? The only answer that historians can give to this question, if they are to act like genuine scientists, is that they predate the nineteenth century, when the ballad was collected by folklorists and polished by Vasile Alecsandri. Other than that, we can resort to different approximations, based on arguments, but it would not be right to push it into the mists of the ages at all costs. It is true that folklore persists for a long time and that it conveys archaic messages. But at the same time it is subject to constant change, in keeping with historical developments.

To capture how Romanians and Hungarians saw each other, at the level of traditional culture, I have resorted to a series of folklore species that explicitly convey images of the Other: proverbs, sayings, and riddles. In fairy tales and ballads, references to other ethnicities or peoples are quite rare and veiled, camouflaged among messages of a different type. Proverbs, on the other hand, tend to define something clearly, sharply, and sententiously, and to briefly convey a general truth, which synthesises the life experience of society—including on the topic that concerns us here.

Regarding the dating and chronological framing of ethnic stereotypes entrenched in popular sayings, given that they were collected and published in the nineteenth century and taking into account the

methodological cautiousness I spoke of above, I preferred to approach them as a preamble to the modern era. Undoubtedly, the proverbs under discussion, most of which sound very traditional and authentic, were not born the day before they were collected. But it would be difficult to say how far back in time they go. What we can say with certainty is that they represent an imagological baggage that *comes* from the medieval period and with which the Romanians and Hungarians stepped into the modern era, in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries.

Moreover, if other imagological sources concerned mainly the images circulated by a small elite, in educated milieus, popular sayings belonged primarily to the peasants, those who made up the majority of the population, among both Romanians and Hungarians. In this regard, however, readers should be forewarned that despite widespread prejudices, folklore should not be seen as an area impervious to influences coming from high culture. Although it expresses the peasants' mental universe, popular culture always communicates with scholarly culture, with the discourse of the Church, of the political powerholders or of the noble elite.

### **The pig, the goat and Oláh Géci's bagpipe**

I will start with an analysis of Hungarian sayings about Romanians. The first important collection of such texts, compiled by Dugonics András, dates from 1820,<sup>1</sup> but the most comprehensive collection was published by Margalits Ede in 1896.<sup>2</sup> It contains over 25,000 sayings and proverbs, including all the items published in previous anthologies, some (not very many) having been collected as early as the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

The sub-entry "oláh" comprises about 20 Hungarian sayings referring to Romanians, but the latter's ethnonym (only in this form) occurs almost 100 times in the work, most of the time in repetitive versions of the same proverbs. We can collate this sample with the 23 Hungarian sayings about Romanians listed by Iuliu Zanne,<sup>3</sup> the author of a collection of Romanian proverbs similar to that compiled by Margalits.

Comparing the number of sayings about Romanians with the number of those about other peoples, we can get a fairly good estimate of

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<sup>1</sup> András Dugonics (ed.), *Magyar példabeszédek és jeles mondások*, I (Szeged: Grün Orbán, 1820).

<sup>2</sup> Ede Margalits (ed.), *Magyar közmondások és közmondásszerű szólások* (Budapest: Kókai Lajos, 1896).

<sup>3</sup> Iuliu A. Zanne, (ed.), *Proverbele românilor din România, Barasabia, Bucovina, Ungaria, Istria și Macedonia*, VI (București: Soccec, 1901), 280-281.

the Romanians' imagological importance in the eyes of Hungarians. In Margalits's collection, while Romanians appear 98 times, Gypsies are mentioned 550 times, Germans 292 times, Jews 261 times, Slovaks 198 times, and Turks 183 times. Only Serbs appear even less often than Romanians, with under 20 occurrences, and Russians are featured only in a few cases. This ranking approximates very well both the notoriety and number of contacts, and the extent of differences or the degree of otherness. Proverbs speak first of all about the differences between "us" and "them," about the negative traits of those around us, by which we identify ourselves and which highlight our superiority and "normality" in relation to dangerous and peculiar strangers around us.

The most different and, therefore, the ones who had the worst image were the Gypsies. Lagging not far behind were the Jews. These were the most vilified ethnic groups by the Hungarians. Germans also received special imagological attention (quantitatively they ranked second), this time as a category demonised for its dominant political status or for some negative traits identified with urban life. Given that most sayings about other peoples are depreciating, the fact that Hungarians did not create many proverbs about Romanians shows that they did not hate and despise them as much, especially among the masses, as the Romanians were tempted to believe. The belief that Hungarians harboured ill feelings towards Romanians is primarily a Romanian stereotype about Hungarians, often refuted by situations such as this one.

Proverbs about Romanians outline the image of a nation of peasants, rather primitive if we compare them with the Hungarian peasantry. They are thus depicted from the perspective of a community that is rural too but enjoys a higher standard of civilisation.

Romanians always wear belts around the waist, opanci squeeze their feet, and their carts creak. Reference is often made to the swelling bagpipes they keep playing (an instrument also attributed to the Serbs), sometimes to the "Romanian cornmeal" or to vinegar, which is also identified with their ethnicity.<sup>4</sup> Romanian vinegar is so strong that it "kills even the mortal sin in a Wallachian."<sup>5</sup> Romanians are frequently associated with their animals: the ox, which Wallachians drive and force to work, or the goat, which is taken to the fair, and above all the pig ("the Romanian pig"), which grunts in the wheat field – a hint at the negligence of Wallachian peasants, who allow their livestock to graze in their

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<sup>4</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 585-586; Zanne, *Proverbele*, 280-281.

<sup>5</sup> Dugonics, *Magyar példabeszédek*, 97.

neighbours' fields. The Romanian is inseparable from his pig and "he must be a dog if he doesn't have a pig."<sup>6</sup>

All these things, which may sound suspicious in the ears of a city dweller, do not actually contain anything special or pejorative. They fall within the scope of ordinary peasant banter. This is how the peasants would portray their neighbours, anywhere in the world.

Other sayings go further and even if they do not demonise the Romanian peasant, they present him as a fool, a trait associated with his rudimentary character, mentioned above. "Oláh Géci" is the name generically assigned to this lovable fool, who "enjoys his half-eye."<sup>7</sup> At other times, his female counterpart, "Oláh Jutka," "enjoys her red slipper." To give another, generic example, anyone could enjoy "a Wallachian bagpiper standing on every toe of their feet." In one case, the Romanian peasant is portrayed as a *trickster* who takes his goat to the fair to sell it, but because its skin is worn off, he pretends that the goat's hair has grown on the inside and keeps the animal quite warm (hence the saying: "His hair grows on the inside, like the Romanian goat's.")<sup>8</sup> Even in this situation, the Romanian's ruse is more likely to amuse than to impress us with its ingenuity. Because of this, such poses denote either neutrality or benign irony.

But if we take another step in examining these attitudes towards Romanians, we will come across a trait that is more clearly outlined. Given that the Romanian peasant is so simple, dumb and uncouth, one could naturally assume that he has no brains. "Green horses and smart Romanians" or "green horses, smart Romanians and kind mother-in-laws" – there are no such things on the face of the Earth!<sup>9</sup> It is true that, elsewhere, the Romanians' place is taken by Serbs or Russians, for it is just as difficult to find "a Lutheran Gypsy, a funny Calvinist or a bright Russian."<sup>10</sup> The fact that the Hungarians' irony can also be directed against their fellow Reformed countrymen tones down its interethnic jabs.

The stereotype of the Romanian fool is illustrated even more convincingly, with an even more personalised reference, by the story of

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<sup>6</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 585.

<sup>7</sup> I have not been able to identify the origin of this ethnic nickname, which may have a connection with the name of Géczi (Ghyczy) János, Governor of Transylvania at the end of the sixteenth century, a nobleman of Romanian origin according to the authors of the petition *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (1791). It might as well be derived from a common name, "Ghiță the Wallachian".

<sup>8</sup> Dugonics, *Magyar példabeszédek*, 210.

<sup>9</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 586; Zanne, *Proverbele*, 280.

<sup>10</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 129.

Bedeu forest. The Romanians from a Bihar village, distressed that a flock of crows had settled in their forest, cut down all the trees lest they should be eaten by the crows. That is why it is said that mindless people “cut down the forest of Bedeu.”<sup>11</sup>

But all these sayings and anecdotes primarily sanction “human stupidity” in general, while “Romanian stupidity” is seen as a particular instance of it. Therefore, they cannot be considered as expressions of a Hungarian sense of superiority that is very specific or out of the ordinary, as long as most nations portray their neighbours in similar ways and make jokes about the stupidity attributed to them. For Romanians, for example, the preferred target in this regard is Bulgarians.<sup>12</sup>

More explicit ethnic values and images can be found in proverbs that resort to direct comparisons between the two peoples. The saying “Hungarian ox, German dog, Wallachian pig” might introduce such a parallel, but it does not seem to be directed against anyone in particular, considering that none of the three animal poses is very flattering. The association of the Wallachian with the pig, which I have also encountered in other sayings, does not seem to suggest the filth of the Romanian, since this is just a characteristic aspect of his peasant life. Dugonics András, who collected this saying, offers us the possibility of an ambivalent interpretation, in the accompanying note: “it has two meanings: it shows either the favourite animal of each of these three peoples, or the animal with which they can be likened.” In another note, however, he settles on the former alternative: “the Hungarians have the most beautiful oxen, the Germans the most beautiful dogs, and the Romanians the best pigs.”<sup>13</sup>

A rhymed saying, collected by Szirmay Antál in 1805 and which can finally be aligned with the nationalist vision that attributes to Hungarians the tendency to dominate the nations around them, sounds as follows: “May the Lord bless us with all that is best,/ And may the Wallachian, the German, and the Slovak serve the Hungarian without rest!”<sup>14</sup>

Szirmay was a scholar and county clerk, so the folk saying he collected could be influenced by the noble mentality and political ideology of the well-educated Hungarian classes. On the other hand, the adage above also sounded quite good, in whatever language, from the peasants’ perspective, because the popular view was strongly imbued with social egotism: it would not be such a bad idea to dance a *czárdás* on the backs of others and to have all the nations around serving us!

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<sup>11</sup> Dugonics, *Magyar példabeszédek*, 127.

<sup>12</sup> Zanne 1901, *Proverbele*, sub-entry.

<sup>13</sup> Dugonics, *Magyar példabeszédek*, 285.

<sup>14</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 585.



This unleashed a streak of negative, hostile ethnic images, sometimes visibly fuelled by people in highly educated milieus. The following saying is included in an 1851 collection, published by Erdélyi János: "Let the Wallachian do, let the Hungarian promise."<sup>15</sup> It is not clear to what extent it expresses a peasant view, in the sense of conveying the social egotism mentioned above (the peasant can also be cruel and push slander into cynicism), or whether it is influenced by the national confrontation climate from the aftermath of the 1848 revolution. In any case, the similarity with a French quip, applied in an exclusively social sphere, is surprising: *promettre c'est noble, tenir c'est bourgeois*.

A harsh comparison from an imagological perspective is implicit in the statement "worse than the Wallachian Gypsy."<sup>16</sup> Although the deprecatory element of the comparison is not the Wallachian in this case, but the Gypsy, the association between them reinforces the negative perspective, in both senses. As seen above, being a Gypsy fared worst in the Hungarians' ranking of ethnic others. But there was something even worse, that is, being a Romanian Gypsy!

As a result, "the only good Wallachian was a roasted one, but let the devil gobble them all up!"<sup>17</sup> The main negative trait attributed to the Romanians in the Hungarian folk imagology, which was also featured in the chancellery documents of the Middle Ages, is related to their presumed violent character, which takes mainly the form of revenge. "Romanian blood boils over in him" and "Romanians never forget" are two sayings that highlight this attribute.<sup>18</sup> Dugonics comments in a note that "one bad trait of the Wallachian is that he crawls up stealthily until he does you in."<sup>19</sup>

The idea that Romanians have a passive-aggressive behaviour, that they are oppressed and can suffer in silence for a long time before snapping into a bloody outpour of vengeance made a spectacular career at the end of the twentieth century. During this period, it underpinned both the Hungarians' view of Romanians and the Romanians' self-image, encapsulated in the phrase "polenta does not explode." We have already seen that Hungarians associated Romanians with cornmeal, their pastoral

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<sup>15</sup> János Erdélyi (ed.), *Magyar közmondások könyve* (Pest: Kozma Vazul, 1851), 309.

<sup>16</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 586. Zanne 1901, *Proverbele*, 281 translates the proverb as follows: "Romanians are worse than Gypsies." The translation (which probably belongs to one of the folklorist's collaborators) emphasises the pejorative character of the saying but is incorrect.

<sup>17</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 585.

<sup>18</sup> Zanne 1901, *Proverbele*, 280-281.

<sup>19</sup> Dugonics, *Magyar példabeszédek*, 97.

food, with oppression and revenge. This expression tied the markers of the Romanians' image into a trope expressing what was deemed to be an essential truth. Romanians often defined themselves by referring to images and clichés that were first wielded in the Hungarian environment.

Returning to the proverbs gathered by Hungarian folklorists, we should note that their hostility is limited to the characteristics outlined above. Some of these seem influenced by the prejudices of the elite culture, others by the political-national confrontations of the nineteenth century. For example, in the collection compiled by Margalits I have not encountered the phrase "Romanians never forget," mentioned by Iuliu Zanne, but it is frequently used by Hungarian authors of historical or literary writings.

The Romanian peasants are sometimes a little hilarious and sometimes a little violent and vindictive—all these aspects being associated with their rudimentary livelihood. At other times, they are pitied by the Hungarians. Destitute, Romanians will eat crab pears, and instead of laughing, they always cry. Even St. Paul forsook the Romanians. "Poor Wallachian peasants say that if the sword breaks, then they will get beaten with the hammer."<sup>20</sup> Not least, "the Wallachian people are the Romans' remnants,"<sup>21</sup> which makes their fate even sadder.

It is obvious that even if these maxims were eventually integrated into folklore discourse, they were derived from high culture. Authentic folk sayings are most often mocking, since peasants are interested in strengthening their self-esteem and self-sufficiency, in relation to the strangers from whom they stand apart. Peasants rarely see anything positive in them, much less are they willing to take their side. But even in these circumstances, the Wallachian peasant does not seem to be a target of particular imagological adversity for the Hungarian peasant. Rather, he is just another peasant, with his specific animals, flaws and habits, which can be scoffed at by any other villager. As an untranslatable pun puts it, tapping into the similarity of *olálkodik* (stalks) and *oláhkodik* (a coinage meaning *Romanianises*), "he who does not Romanianise/ lurk walks in peace."<sup>22</sup> This is perfectly true for two peasant communities that did not spend too much time "stalking" one another, even from a paremiological point of view, when they were allowed by their elites to quietly raise their oxen, goats and pigs.

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<sup>20</sup> Margalits, *Magyar közmondások*, 607.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 585.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 592.

### **Hungarian Hungarian up your arse a rapier**

Hungarians do not have many proverbs about Romanians and Romanian sayings about Hungarians are also quite rare. Romanian culture has a paremiological collection similar to that compiled by Margalits and published exactly in the same period, on the cusp of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Even the number of entries (over 20,000) that appear in *Romanian Proverbs*, a work in ten volumes edited by Iuliu Zanne, is close to the number of sayings edited in the Hungarian collection. Significantly for the nationalist agenda of the two cultural endeavours, Margalits's volume was printed in the year celebrating the Hungarian Millennium (1896), while that of Zanne was presented by the Romanian delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 as a testimony of the unity of Romanians everywhere and argument in favour of expanding the borders of Romania.<sup>23</sup>

The Romanian sayings with ethnic references published in this collection are generally fewer than those in the Hungarian collection. This, however, should not be attributed to the very different outlook of Romanian folklore or to the Romanians' mentality. It's explanation lies in the different ways of collecting these texts (a process that, for the Hungarians, began in the sixteenth century), as well as in the different relations between popular and elite culture in Hungary.

In the case of the Romanian proverbs, the main "targets" of imagological reflection are the Gypsies, with over 100 entries in Zanne's collection. Next come the Turks, with 50 entries. Positions 3 and 4 are occupied almost equally by Germans and Jews (*jidani*, *jidovi*, *uvrei*), with about 30 entries each. Greeks appear with 25 entries, Russians (and Moskals) with 15, Tatars about the same, and the neighbouring Bulgarian and Serbian peoples are featured in only 9 and 5 proverbs respectively. In this context, the collection includes only 5 sayings about Hungarians, plus 4 about *ungureni* (Romanians of Transylvanian extraction) and 3 about "Ianoș." Those about Hungarians were collected mainly in Transylvania and Banat, while those about *ungureni* and "Ianoș" in Muntenia.

Such low figures also indicated that for the Romanian peasants the Hungarians did not represent an important imagological partner, and their specific features were not capable of provoking a significant reaction. For those in old Romania, they did not really exist, except in the form of Transylvanian (*ungureni*) neighbours, and the Romanians in Transylvania did not perceive the Hungarians as a major figure of

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<sup>23</sup> Stelian Dumistrăcel, in Iuliu A. Zanne (ed.), *Proverbele românilor din România, Barasabia, Bucovina, Ungaria, Istria și Macedonia* (Iași: Vasiliana'98, 2019), I, Cover 4.

otherness to be portrayed in garish tones, as they did with the Gypsies, the Jews or the Turks of yesteryear. Hungarians were not so foreign, in other words.

If we analyse the meagre content of the five Romanian sayings about Hungarians included in Zanne's collection, we may notice that they were all negative and used the basic clichés that composed their image.

"The Hungarian is a cur"<sup>24</sup> defines the most important feature of the Hungarians in the Romanians' view. This perspective was first voiced in the writings of the Wallachian chroniclers: Hungarians are vile. This must have been a peasant phrase, as revealed by the animal register of the comparison, but it should be noted that Zanne's source had been a priest from a Banat village.

The second saying states that "the Hungarian is boastful, but fearful."<sup>25</sup> The self-conceit attributed to Hungarians was the most widespread stereotype that defined them not only in the eyes of Romanians, but throughout the European continent. The Hungarians' lack of courage, entwined with their pompousness, reinforced this idea, because the absurdity of Hungarian pride stood out even better if it was doubled by cowardice. The portrait meant to systematically disqualify the Hungarian was thus complete. Logically speaking, one might think that the Hungarian's wickedness could fuel his ability to harm the Romanians, but this contradicted the image of the coward who could not act. But ethnic images, as mentioned above, are usually not guided by the rules of rational thinking and can serenely harmonise deeply contradictory drives.

Moreover, the Hungarians' "vileness," evoked in the first saying, did not necessarily imply the actual manifestation of hostile actions. It was, first and foremost, a visceral characteristic of the Hungarians, a form of immanent evil intrinsically linked to these people – an aspect that was captured by Zanne in an explanatory note: "meaning un-merciful, bad to the bone."<sup>26</sup>

The third maxim, also from the Banat, says: "when you're most fond of a Hungarian, pull one of his eyes out."<sup>27</sup> The violence of phrase may upset a modern reader, but these references were deeply entrenched in the popular mentality and were intended to bring out an essential truth. At the same time, it can be considered a popular version of Eminescu's famous adage from the poem "Doina": "Those who strangers have loved/ Let hounds chomp their heart" (1883).

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<sup>24</sup> Zanne 1901, *Proverbele*, 429, position 14.409.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., position 14.410.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., position 14.409.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., position 14.408.

The message thus pithily conveyed was as follows: never get close to a Hungarian, never become his ally. Harboursing warm feelings towards him was totally forbidden. Since compliance with this taboo was extremely important, to avoid violating it, one had to do the worst thing that could be done to one's enemy, namely pull his eyes out. In a similar way, the ballad "The Frank's Daughter" stigmatises relationships with foreigners. When the protagonist, a mighty young man, wishes to marry a woman epitomising radical otherness (she comes from the world of the "Franks" or the "Latins," Godless heathens), the only options that can save him are either to kill her or "shoot" her in the eyes.<sup>28</sup> Such a forbidden liaison can only end very badly, which is why it must be put an end to by the most severe means.

The question was whether the Hungarian was also part of this world of absolute otherness, which was embodied by the "defiled Latin, not cross-baptised" in the Middle Ages. According to the above-mentioned saying, collected in a Banat village at the end of the nineteenth century, the answer was yes.

The following entry on Hungarians from Zanne's collection can help us to better understand the context in which these sayings made sense. According to this proverb, "There's fresh air in the Carpathians / but they are littered with Hungarians." In addition to this aphorism (passed on by his father to "Badea Ciobanu, an old man of over 80 years, who had fled Transylvania" and currently resided in a commune in Vlaşca County), the publisher reproduced a "folk poem," gathered from the same informant:

Hungarians here,  
Hungarian there,  
Hungarians find trails everywhere,  
Hungarians, filthy barbarians,  
They're onto trails in all the areas.  
They come and sneak in on our land,  
Worse than beasts of the hinterland.  
Now woe to Romanians, alas,  
With masters like these in the morass,  
Of whom they'll ne'er get rid  
Lest blood is shed, God forbid.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Sorin Mitu, *Transilvania mea. Istorie, mentalităţi, identităţi* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2013), 492-493.

<sup>29</sup> Zanne 1901, *Proverbele*, 430, position 14.412.

What is easily noticed is the elevated nature of the so-called folk saying quoted above, in terms of its lexical and semantic components (a real peasant would never have spoken about the “fresh air in the Carpathians”). The lyrics that accompany it and that deploy folklore motifs (the filthy barbarians, the foreigners waylaying us on every path and surrounding us) give a popular whiff to these texts and somehow connect the traditional mentality with the national political disputes of the 1900s. They are, however, no longer folklore proper, but the creation of a literate author who introduced his contemporary Hungarians to storylines implicit in older folk motifs.

Moreover, the fact that all four sayings analysed above (there’s not many more of these) convey the same negative image regarding Hungarians, with no distinguishing nuances, relates to the political atmosphere of the century of nationalities. Zanne’s intention must have been to create a certain portrait of the Hungarians, consistent with what the national disputes of the time said about them.

Reservations and adversity towards foreigners, in general, and the negative traits attributed to Hungarians, in particular, were genuine responses, illustrating popular mentality. However, their inclusion in a monolithic discourse that lacked any nuances in depicting the national conflict with the Hungarians was due not so much to a folklore image but to a highbrow cultural form. The peasants or the rural elites of the time could indeed compose such texts. But these no longer illustrated the traditional beliefs of an illiterate rural society, since they made the transition to other forms of expression and sensibility, specific to the modern age.

The last saying whose meanings I will try to draw out evokes a traditional peasant mentality, highlighting the way the Hungarians were seen by the Romanian peasants, with their own eyes, and not through the lens of ideological messages filtered by the priest, the notary or the teacher: “Hungarian/ Bungarian,” with the versions “Hungarian Bungarian/ up your arse a rapier” and, respectively, “Hungarian Bungarian/ Sniffing his arse like a vulgarian.”<sup>30</sup>

Readers who think that such fragments, seemingly devoid of any subtlety, do not deserve much comment are sorely mistaken. At first glance, they belong to the same hostile register as the previous sayings, a fact that is emphasised in Zanne’s correct comment: “they say that to Hungarians, in mockery.” However, this time the reason for slander no longer pertained to some irresolvable historical or national adversity, or

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., position 14.408.

to the need to condemn the infamous Hungarian oppression. Transpiring now was the ordinary, healthy, everyday folk slur, which can be noticed in most Hungarian sayings about Romanians as well.

But why did the Romanian peasants laugh at the Hungarians? Because their names sound funny! And this was not at all a superficial reason, except from the perspective of an observer with a modern mindset. These peasants laughed much the same way the ancient Greeks mocked the language and the names of the Barbarians, those who, from their point of view, could only say *bar-bar*!

Laughing at the way the Others looked, behaved, fed their animals, or talked to each other, the peasants delineated their self-identity in relation to otherness. Collective mockery of the neighbouring communities was a method by which they emphasised and perpetuated their own cultural traits, while managing to feel comfortable within the limits of their own symbolic sphere. From here came the special satisfaction with which peasants shouted at the others, grinning mockingly, "Hungarian Bungarian/ up your arse a rapier!" and not from some uncouthness that could only be sensed by the stranger who came from the city, but who did not find his place in the peasants' value system.

The sayings whose protagonist is "Ianoș" –and which Zanne did not count among those concerning the Hungarians– illustrate the same traditional peasant view and are devoid of the hostile sharpness of the first pieces analysed above. "The Hungarian" was an abstract collective figure, condensing all the negative traits attributed to his nation, while "Ianoș," even if this was also a generic name, embodied the Hungarian as a real human figure. Significantly, the three adages that evoke him come from Wallachia, and not Transylvania.

The first of them says: "poor Ianoș, he died with his pipe up his arse!" This is how Zanne explains the meaning of the saying: "When someone asks for a high price on a stupid thing, then he is answered, in jest, with the above saying."<sup>31</sup> The Hungarian Ianoș is the character summoned to embody this human evil, which has a vague negative connotation, albeit a rather benign one, because it turns against the one who illustrates it. The phrase is used in jest, Zanne claims, and not in mockery. Ianoș is therefore more of a pitiful fool than an unsympathetic character, corresponding to Oláh Géci from the sayings of the Hungarians. His behaviour is a bit unrealistic, an aspect that can be associated with the conceit and emphasis attributed to Hungarians, but

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 155, position 13.537.

very discreetly. The “anal” reference, which is also found in the previous sayings, has nothing to do with the Hungarians. I have come across it in many sayings, because for the Romanian peasant to shove something up one’s arse was entirely unnatural; consequently, any reference of this kind was guaranteed to achieve a hilarious effect, while ensuring that deprecation reached the target of irony.

The other two sayings are largely phonetic wordplay, like “Hungarian Bungalow,” and have a similar purpose: to show us that Ianoș’s language is hilarious and unintelligible. The first goes as follows: “Helter-skelter splosh/ From our bloke Ianoș.”<sup>32</sup> It is significant that in this saying, collected in Buzău County, where many Hungarians from Transylvania lived, Ianoș is defined as a familiar, as a “bloke,” that is, a fellow villager of the same age and social status. The second saying, “Ianoș/ Pașoș/ Curpușel,”<sup>33</sup> is told to Hungarians, Zanne reminds us, in jest and is accompanied by an explanatory anecdote that reproduces the dialogue between a Romanian and a Romanian-speaking Hungarian:

‘Who’s there?’

‘It are me!’

‘Who’s there?’

‘It are me, Mistah Ianosh Patsohs curpușel, who lives at Tutescu artisan Covaci. Sent mistress shake quilt at river edge!’

The Hungarian is hilarious, his words are guaranteed to cause laughter and make him into a clown who is looked down upon with benevolent irony—a posture that is a far cry from the image of the evil and oppressive hound, which deserves to have its eyes pulled out, from the previous sayings. The quote is important because it foreshadows two of the strongest Romanian stereotypes regarding Hungarians, according to which *the Hungarian language is ugly*, and Hungarians *won’t / can’t learn Romanian*. In the anecdote above, the emphasis was laid on the corrupted manner in which Hungarians speak Romanian, just as Jews, Gypsies, Germans or Turks have their own specific ways of mispronouncing Romanian words. These differences highlighted the otherness, the abnormality, the distance between us and them. And secondly, in the ordinary man’s view, it’s quite all right to laugh at someone who does not speak Romanian well!

Their different language and the odd way in which they spoke Romanian (coupled with the image of the fool) represented an essential marker of otherness in the popular mentality. The symbolic distance

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 154, position 13.536.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 155, position 13.537.



between Romanians and Hungarians was shaped primarily by expressions like “Hungarian Bungarian,” emphasising the linguistic differences that separate us. The Romanian peasants could learn about the generic “wickedness” of the Hungarians as a whole nation (and not just of the nobles or some Hungarian authorities), from the discourse of the elites which overlapped the aforementioned notions. This way of defining the other could be taken up in folklore as well. However, the perception that the Hungarians spoke in an incomprehensible way was a result of the Romanian peasants’ direct observation.

The peasants of Wallachia were struck by these aspects, as they must have wondered why the Hungarians spoke so peculiarly. For the Romanian peasants of Transylvania, who were accustomed to hearing such words, articulated sounds in the same manner, used similar lexical items, and maybe even spoke the Hungarian language (or, in any case, could swear in it), it was more difficult to mock the accent or the language of their Transylvanian compatriots, particularly since there were no other radical elements of otherness which would differentiate them from the Hungarian peasants, except for religious confession.

But the latter, like other ethnographic or mentality aspects that distinguished them, did not generate such a dramatic perception because the two communities, by and large, peacefully coexisted on a daily basis. Typically, in times of social tranquillity, when there were no uprisings or religious unrest, the religious otherness that separated Romanians and Hungarians was tamed by centuries of cohabitation. Sometimes peasants lived in mixed villages with two or even more places of worship of different denominations. Both Romanians and Hungarians were quite familiar with the religious particularities of their neighbours, who, after all, were Christians and had their own church—even if, in some cases, it had a cock at the top of the spire, instead of a cross, or its priest was a bearded peasant muttering things in Slavonic.

The few sayings about Hungarians collected by Zanne in every region inhabited by Romanians also show us how Romanian popular culture was influenced by nationalist messages in the nineteenth century. These were circulated by elites, primarily rural ones—the priests, notaries, and teachers who frequently featured among the folklorists’ informants. One may wonder how “popular” these expressions were, or, in other words, how well they reflected the peasants’ view. But, as mentioned before, there is no such thing as a “pure” rural mentality, unaffected by the most diverse interferences: it is a construct shaped by the townspeople fascinated by the illusion of rural “authenticity.”

Finally, it will be increasingly difficult to distinguish between the folk sayings of the peasants, who used to cry “Hungarian Bungalow,” and the allegedly folk lyrics that maintained a negative image of the Hungarians, based on political messages, this time, composed by literate people. Romanian writers reinforced this representation in highly expressive ways. Great poets who lived at the time of the Dual Monarchy, such as Mihai Eminescu, George Coșbuc and Octavian Goga, composed lyrics “inspired by folk verse.” Their vision was more or less close to that of the peasants, but these were, in any case, elevated and refined creations, in which the Hungarians were projected as the national enemy, the irreconcilably antagonised foreigners: “From Brașov to Abrud/ What I see and hear could/ Were cruel Hungarian in the underwood.”<sup>34</sup> Mihail Sadoveanu, the most representative prose writer of Romanian classical literature, author of the novel *Baltagul* [‘The Hatchet,’ 1930], resorted not to the cliché of the “vile Hungarian,” but to that of the boastful, perky and rowdy Hungarian: “The good Lord, having made up the world [...] beckoned the Hungarian and chose for him a few toys that were lying around himself: ‘Here, I’ll give you boots and spurs and resin to shape your moustache into swooping handles; to feel conceited and to like partying with companions.’”<sup>35</sup> In this way, Sadoveanu proved to be closer to the popular vision, which he intended to faithfully convey in his work, because the Romanian peasant, as seen above, was much more tempted to mock a familiar neighbour than to demonise an unassailable enemy.

On the other hand, his educated readers, who had previously read Eminescu and Goga and learned from the first years of school about the endless conflicts between the two nations, were already well aware of how vile the Hungarians were. Because of that, Sadoveanu’s readers read even these more benign passages in a hostile key. In contrast to the traditional peasant mentality, accustomed to less tense representations of the Hungarians, the educated Romanian public would never accept that Hungarians could be decent human beings, since in their view the various negative aspects of the latter’s image kept adding up and reinforcing the biased stereotypes.

## Conclusions

As I have already mentioned, these popular clichés, whether Hungarian or Romanian, went back at least to the eighteenth century and, in all likelihood, reflected the mentalities of an even more distant past. Like in

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<sup>34</sup> Mihai Eminescu, *Poezii tipărite în timpul vieții*, III (București: Fundația „Regele Mihai I”, 1944), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Dan Horia Mazilu, *Noi despre ceilalți. Fals tratat de imagologie* (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 5-6.

today's media, peasant representations of the other rested on the principle of "no news is good news." Peasants did not reflect on their neighbours in order to outline an objective portrait of them, but to display and reinforce their own cultural features, setting themselves apart from the strangers surrounding them. For this reason, they usually mocked and did not praise the Other. Mockery and ridicule were much more common than positive assessments, regardless of whether the relations between the two communities were good or bad. In this general framework, the popular images of the two peasant communities were agreeable and conveyed a sense of closeness and familiarity rather than a high degree of otherness (as was the case with the imagological relationships maintained with the Gypsies or the Jews).

The Hungarians' image about Romanians, as it emerges from Margalits's collection, is quite considerate. I have not encountered collective insults such as "stinky Wallachian" (*büddös oláh*), an expression whose origin lies in other sources, or "thieving Wallachian" (*rabló oláh*), present in medieval documents and narrative sources. Some harsher popular clichés relate to the violence characteristic of the Middle Ages, while references to the political superiority of the Hungarians were obviously influenced by the discourse of the educated noble elite. In 1896 the Romanians could still seem quite mild and harmless, in the eyes of a Hungarian who neglected their radicalisation and did not suspect what they would end up doing in 1918.

For Romanians, on the other hand, the years between the revolution of 1848 and the first world conflagration represented the culmination of their confrontation with the Hungarians. This view belonged primarily to the cultivated elite, but it would also quickly spread among the peasantry. On the other hand, many Romanian peasants in Transylvania had taken part in the revolution, as well as in the interethnic conflict it generated. This watershed moment in the history of Romanian-Hungarian relations gave rise later to a conflicting, bellicose popular image. The fact that the Romanian sayings, assembled by Zanne from this perspective, are more hostile compared to the Hungarian ones relates to these political circumstances. Notwithstanding all this, in traditional Romanian images the relationship with the Hungarians was rendered through assertive irony, and not through xenophobic diatribe.<sup>36</sup>

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# The Institution of the Prefecture in Romania (1864–1892): Between social relations of patronage and political networks

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**Abstract:** Historical research on the institution of the prefecture in Romania (United Principalities) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a fundamental institution of modern state administration, involves several levels of analysis, combining institutional, political and social history. Our paper will focus on several aspects, in relation to a number of historical features specific to the Romanian case. These features stem from the implementation of a Western-origin institutional model in Romania, after the union of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, a maturation of the modern administration can be observed, both legislatively and functionally.

In addition to the legislative framework of this period (the communal law of April 1864, amended in March 1872 and March 1883, the law on county councils of April 1864 and the law on the organization of administrative authorities of November 1892), other factors are also noteworthy, which made the prefect in Romania not only a government agent at the local level, but also a county administrator: the patronage relations of the Romanian elite – a legacy of the Old Regime, and the gradual consolidation of the power networks of the governing political parties, both of which had a relevant impact on the selection process of local officials and the conduct of parliamentary elections.

**Key words:** Institutional history, administrative reform, ispravnik, prefect

**Rezumat:** Cercetarea istorică a instituției prefecturii în România (Principatele Unite) în secolul al XIX-lea, ca instituție fundamentală

a administrației de stat moderne, implică mai multe niveluri de analiză, combinând istoria instituțională cu istoria politică și socială. Ne vom concentra asupra câtorva aspecte, în legătură cu unele trăsături istorice specifice cazului românesc, rezultate din aplicarea unui model instituțional de origine occidentală în România, după unirea Principatelor Moldovei și Valahiei, până la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea, când se poate observa o maturizare a administrației moderne, atât din punct de vedere legislativ, cât și funcțional.

Pe lângă cadrul legislativ al acestei perioade (legea comunală din aprilie 1864, modificată în martie 1872 și martie 1883, legea consiliilor județene din aprilie 1864 și legea de organizare a autorităților administrative din noiembrie 1892), se remarcă și alți factori care au făcut ca prefectul să fie în România nu doar un agent guvernamental la nivel local, ci și un administrator al județului: relațiile de patronaj proprii elitei românești, moștenire a Vechiului Regim și consolidarea treptată a rețelelor de putere ale partidelor politice guvernamentale, ambele având un impact relevant în procesul de selecție al funcționarilor de la nivel local și în desfășurarea alegerilor parlamentare.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** istorie instituțională, reformă, ispravnic, prefect

## Introduction

In a famous drama written by one of the greatest Romanian authors, Ion Luca Caragiale, the central figures in the plot competing for the leading position on the Liberal Party's county electoral list are Prefect Tipătescu and the owner of the most important local newspaper, Cațavencu. Nothing spectacular or unusual so far, but the narrative thread captures the essence of the distribution of power at the local level, also in addition to the consequences of the social and political transformations that took place in Romania in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Tipătescu, far from being a local potentate, proves to actually be an ambitious man, elevated by the protection and the services he provides to the true power holders – prestigious families stemming from the estate owners, whose representative, Trahanache, leads the local branch of the party. In contrast to Tipătescu, the journalist Cațavencu acquired a certain notoriety among the public and voters over time. Moreover, he established solid connections with the local bourgeoisie, patronizing the company Aurora

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<sup>1</sup> Garabet Ibrăileanu, *Spiritual critic în cultura românească* (Iași: Editura revistei „Viața Românească”, 1909), 227–228.

Română (Romanian Aurora). Willing to enter into politics using this precious social and legitimacy capital, he personifies the new local power networks ready to compete with the old ones.<sup>2</sup> From this titanic clash, presented in touches full of humour, another character emerges victorious, Dandanache, who had been sent to the county by the party's head office, with orders to be placed first on the electoral list. This is how Caragiale masterfully ended his portrayal of the local power dynamics in the Romanian society of 1890.

Translating this narrative into historical language, it can be said that the history of the institution of the prefect in Romania, from its establishment during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza until the end of the nineteenth century, is to a large extent the result of the interference of several essential factors: *firstly*, the legislation on administrative organization, together with one of its main consequences, namely the emergence of a new social category, the body of state officials;<sup>3</sup> *secondly*, the power networks of families descended from the old nobility, founded on historical, social and genealogical prestige, used to patronize the appointment of county officials (*ispavnik*, then *prefect*) and to influence their conduct in public service;<sup>4</sup> *thirdly*, the provincial political parties emerged after the Union of 1859 (Moldavian and Wallachian), then, after 1880, the political parties with national coverage, as agents of the government;<sup>5</sup> *fourthly*, the rising local bourgeoisie, big merchants, bankers, estate tenants, who, through the power of money, tried to exert a certain influence on the activity of the prefects, and in the local political game, speculating the former boyars' need for liquid assets and the interest of the liberal and conservative parties to organize well-structured and stable county branches.<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, in the study of this topic, belonging to the history of modern state building, the case of the institution of *prefect* requires an analysis of the institutional architecture, by delving into the socio-

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<sup>2</sup> Pompiliu Constantinescu, *Scrieri*, II (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967), 131.

<sup>3</sup> Manuel Guțan, *Istoria administrației publice românești*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bucharest: Editura Hamangiu, 2006), 152–154; Andrei Florin Sora, *Servir l'état roumain, Le corps préfectoral, 1866–1940* (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2011), 101–105, 130–133.

<sup>4</sup> About the numerous figures from the boyar families of Iași, Bucharest and from counties that held the office of prefect, see Rudolf Suțu, *Iașii de odinioară*, II, (Iași: Viața Românească, 1928); M. Theodorian-Carada, *Efimeridele: Însemnări și amintiri*, I (Bucharest: Tipografia "Capitalei", 1930); Dim R. Rosetti, *Dicționarul contemporanilor*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (Bucharest: Editura "Populară", 1897).

<sup>5</sup> Andrei Florin Sora, "La politisation de la fonction de préfet dans la Roumanie moderne (1866–1916)," in *Penser le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle: Nouveaux chantiers de recherche*, Silvia Marton, Constanța Vintilă-Ghițulescu (eds.) (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2013), 203–218.

<sup>6</sup> Sorin Alexandrescu, *Privind înapoi, modernitatea* (Bucharest: Univers, 1999), 95–98.

political context, the administrative tradition, and the ideological influences.<sup>7</sup> In the Romanian case, the historical investigation focused mainly on the issue of foreign influences (Franco-Belgian), and on the solutions promoted by the political parties, reflected in the legislation adopted over time. Less attention has been paid to the legacy of the Old Regime, embodied in the *ispravnik* institution, which aligns with a distinct political and institutional model (*Politzestaat*, *Regulatory state*), and the patronage relations specific to the Romanian elite.

### **Legal framework, administrative models and practices**

The model of government proper to the political regime established by the Organic Regulations (1831), inherited by the modern Romanian state at its foundation through the union of Moldavia and Wallachia (1859), placed the institution of the *ispravnik* at the centre of the administrative system, as the main organ of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the local level: “the entire administration of the interior shall henceforth be entrusted to The Department of Internal Affairs,” a new institution created by the Organic Regulations, and “the *ispravniks* shall be under its immediate command.” The three sections or offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs – the first (municipal councils, urban and rural police, state food depots, prevention of epidemics, market trading); the second (supervision of agricultural activities and of compliance with the organic law on the labour relations between village owners and peasants, maintenance of the roads and bridges); the third (statistics of inhabitants and resources, tax censuses, forestry fund management) – carried out the Minister’s orders through the *ispravniks*, who were responsible for their implementation.<sup>8</sup> The provisions of the other ministries (finance, army, justice; cults and public instruction) were to be forwarded to the *ispravniks* only through the State Secretariat – a ministry inspired, in structure and functions, by the Russian Ministry of Control<sup>9</sup> –, which determined

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Painter, Guy B. Peters, *Tradition and Public Administration*, (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3–17; Gildas Tanguy, Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans, “Variations on the Prefectoral Figure in Europe: Some Research Questions and an Ideal-Type for a Comparison”, in *Prefects, Governors and Commissioners Territorial Representatives of the State in Europe*, Gildas Tanguy and Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans (eds.) (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 5.

<sup>8</sup> “Reglement organicesc a Moldovei cuprins în noi capite, 1831,” in *Regulamentul organic al Moldovei*, Dumitru Vitcu and Gabriel Bădărașu (eds.) (Iași: Junimea, 2004), 254–255.

<sup>9</sup> Ivan Golovine, *Histoire d’Alexandre I<sup>er</sup> empereur de Russie* (Leipzig, Paris: s.n., 1859), 23; Eduard Thaden, *Russia’s Western Borderlands, 1710–1870* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 117–118.



whether the tasks in question were to be carried out by the *ispravniks* or by other local institutions, in accordance with the Organic Regulation.<sup>10</sup>

Another important task of the *ispravniks* was organizing the elections for the Public Assembly in the counties<sup>11</sup> and for the “villages’ watchmen,” a type of sub-prefects, who, once elected by the inhabitants who owned villages or parts of villages, operated under the authority of the *ispravnik*, the latter becoming their direct superior.<sup>12</sup> Established by the Phanariot prince Constantin Mavrocordat in the mid-eighteenth century, the office of *ispravnik*, with extensive but imprecise administrative, fiscal and judicial powers,<sup>13</sup> has been so profoundly transformed by the organic law that all that remains of its traditional nature was the name.

Unlike the old *ispravniks*, whose authority depended more on the social and personal prestige of the holder rather than on the nature of the function, which was inconsistent and changeable, the *ispravniks* of the regulatory regime had only administrative tasks. These tasks, however, were defined clearly by the law. They were agents of the governmental power and local administrators, in accordance with the rules of a well-organized state (*Politzestaat*, *Regulatory state*) present in the constitutional charters of the first half of the nineteenth century. The general features of the *Politzestaat* – uniformity of the legislation, extensive and precise regulation of the powers and functioning of institutions, a large bureaucratic apparatus organized according to the principle of hierarchical subordination, separation of the administration from the judiciary, a general code of civil and criminal law, a ministerial-type executive body, grouping together state officials heading specialized departments, discursive and repressive control of the public space – can be found in this constitutional charter.<sup>14</sup> During the same period, in Prussia, and in the Austrian and Russian Empires, the governors or commissars of counties or districts no longer had judicial powers. Instead, they received extensive

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<sup>10</sup> “Reglement organicesc a Moldovei,” 257.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 331–332.

<sup>13</sup> N. Grigoraș, *Dregătorii târgurilor moldovenesti și atribuțiunile lor până la Regulamentul Organic* (Iași: Tipografia “Avântul”, 1942), 95–102.

<sup>14</sup> Hubert C. Johnson, “The Concept of Bureaucracy in Cameralism,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 79, no. 3 (1964): 390–391; Brian Chapman, *The Profession of Government: The Public Service in Europe* (London: Unwin University Books, 1971); Mark Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity,” *American Historical Review*, 80, no. 5 (1975): 1226–1228; W. H. G. Armytage, *The Rise of the Technocrats: A Social History*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2007); John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 22–24.

and precisely regulated responsibilities in the administration of institutions, concerning economic resources and public order.<sup>15</sup>

In the Romanian Principalities, according to their established original purpose, the role of the *ispravniks* at the local level was to “supervise with the greatest strictness the conduct of officials, to cultivate in them a contempt for existing disorder” and to enforce their compliance with the organic law.<sup>16</sup> The memoirs of the first decade of the regulatory period unanimously emphasise the particular importance of “the new institution of *ispravnik*” in the modernization of the administration, in the application of the most diverse laws and provisions necessary for internal development and to overcome the state of chaos and lawlessness typical of the Old Regime.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, in the years prior to the 1848 Revolution and in the decade that followed, the *ispravnik* became, in the public perception, associated with the abuse and oppression of a despotic political regime, given that they “had the authority to enter homes, and demonstrated a lack of regard for individuals, conducting thorough and sometimes brutal inquiries.”<sup>18</sup>

The fundamental difference between the role of the *ispravnik*, according to the *Regulatory state* model specific to the institutional organization of Moldavia and Wallachia between 1831 and 1856, and the role of the prefects, after 1859, was *in principle* that the *ispravniks* were *responsible* for the application of legislation at the local level and for the

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Pintner, “The Social Characteristics of the Early Nineteenth Century Russian Bureaucracy,” in *Slavic Review*, 29, no. 3 (1970): 441–443; Mark Raeff, “Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia 1700–1905,” *The American Historical Review*, 84, no. 2 (1979): 409; Marion W. Gray, *Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1986), 150–157; Gianmaria Ajani, “The Rise and Fall of the Law-Based State in the Experience of Russian Legal Scholarship: Foreign Scholarship and Domestic Style,” in *Toward the «Rule of Law in Russia»? Political and Legal Reform in the Transition Period*, Edited by Donald D. Barry, (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), 4–5.

<sup>16</sup> A. F. Mirkovich, M. F. Mirkovich, *Fedor Iakovlevich Mirkovich: Ego zhizneopisanie sostavlennoe po ostavlennym ego zapiskam, vospominaniyam blizkikh liudei, i podlinnym dokumentam*, II (St. Petersburg: Voennaia tipografiia, 1889), 42.

<sup>17</sup> Nicolae Kretzulescu, *Amintiri istorice* (Bucharest: Editura ziarului “Universul”, 1940), 14–31; N. Iorga, *Un cugetător politic moldovean de la jumătatea veacului al XIX-lea: Ștefan Scarlat Dăscălescu* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1932), 15; *Memoriile Principelui Nicolae Suțu, mare logofăt al Moldovei 1798–1871*, translation from French, introduction and commentaries by Georgeta Penelea-Filitti (Bucharest: Fundația Culturală Română, 1997), 97–98; Gh. Adamescu, “Epoca regulamentară din punct de vedere politic și cultural,” *Literatură și artă română*, 2, no. 5 (1899): 299.

<sup>18</sup> “... au puterea să calce casa și, nerespectând persoanele, să caute pretutindeni și cu cea mai brutală cercetare” (“Correspondență în privirea gazetelor în Moldova,” in *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române. Acte și documente*, V, 1848 octombrie 4 – 1848 decembrie 31 (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1904), 304).

*proper functioning of all institutions*, while the prefects would have a different type of duties, only to *oversee* the correct and efficient application of legislation by the institutions mandated by law at local level. It remains to be seen whether the powers conferred by law, the attitude of the political parties and the social elite with influence at the local level truly allowed the prefect's institution to function in accordance with this model, or whether historical circumstances concurred to the prefect's authority also including additional features of effective administration of the county entrusted to him.

Following the features of the transition from *ispravnik* to prefect, ideologically and constitutionally, the prefect institution in Romania was inspired by the French model. However, the question is: *which model*? Is the ideal model the prefect as an agent of central government and mediator between centre and periphery, or the prefect as departmental administrator?<sup>19</sup> In addition to the ideological and constitutional legacy of the Great French Revolution, the role of the prefect institution in the governance of the modern unitary state was precisely defined by the regime of Napoleon I, "when the state apparatus was based on a centralized, efficient, and hierarchical bureaucracy ranging from prefects to mayors."<sup>20</sup> According to the Napoleonic model, the prefects had not only the task to administrate the department entrusted to them on the basis of the laws and of ministerial provisions, but also to act as mediators between the institutional hierarchy of the state and the social and power hierarchies at the local level.<sup>21</sup> While in the first half of the nineteenth century, after the collapse of the Napoleonic regime, the great landowners played an important role in the management of departmental governance, with the establishment of the Second French Empire, the *conseils généraux* "were never able to obtain extensive power, and the state-appointed prefect was the more or less omnipotent authority at the local level."<sup>22</sup> Napoleon III's regime was *the height of the prefect's power*, followed by genuine attempts of administrative decentralization during

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<sup>19</sup> Gildas Tanguy, Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans, "Variations on the Prefectoral Figure in Europe: Some Research Questions and an Ideal-Type for a Comparison," in *Prefects, Governors and Commissioners Territorial Representatives of the State in Europe*, Gildas Tanguy and Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans (eds.) (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 6–7.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 58.

<sup>21</sup> Pierre Karila-Cohen, "For a European History of Prefects and Governors: Administrative Action and State-Building in the Nineteenth Century," in *Prefects and Governors in Nineteenth Century Europe: Towards a Comparative History of Provincial Senior Officials*, Pierre Karila-Cohen (ed.) (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 3.

<sup>22</sup> David Spring, *European Landed Elites in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins University Press, 2020), 145.

the Third Republic.<sup>23</sup> For this reason, in assessing the impact of the French model on the institution of the prefect in the early years of the existence of the Romanian state, it is necessary to take into account the prefect's role as administrator of the department, with increased powers, in the France of the Second Empire. On the one hand, the "myth of the omnipotence of the prefect," as an expression of an authoritarian regime in Napoleon III's France has been subjected to a critical historical analysis: from the decree of 25 March 1852, which gave the prefect effective authority over the departmental and communal councils, towards the end of the Empire, there was an erosion of their power through the increasing influence of the deputies elected in the department and the parties that supported them.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, during this period (1852–1870), the prefects retained the power to dismiss the mayors of municipalities and communes, in accordance with the law, to preside over the proceedings of the departmental councils and to approve the work of departmental and municipal councils in all matters.<sup>25</sup> These prefects' prerogatives in relation to the institutions of local "power" were to be found in the United Principalities during the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, as well as over the decades that followed, proving that the main source of inspiration for the Romanian governmental elite was the regime of Napoleon III.

It should also be said that the Belgian model (the other ideological and constitutional reference preferred in the Romanian scientific literature), exhibited several distinctive features. These features render it incompatible with the French administrative model of the Second Empire and, by extension, limited its influence on defining the relations between the local organ of central power (the prefect) and the departmental or communal councils in the Romanian case. Article 108 of the Belgian Constitution provided that "provincial and communal institutions shall be determined by law,"<sup>26</sup> an act adopted on 30 April 1836, which established the *provincial councils* of the nine provinces of the Kingdom of Belgium, with wide-ranging powers that gave them significant autonomy: the councils proposed candidates for the members of the courts of appeal of the provinces, as well as for the presidents and vice-

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<sup>23</sup> Alistair Cole, "Prefects in Search of a Role in a Europeanised France," *Journal of Public Policy*, 31, no. 3 (2011): 387.

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Le Clère, Vincent Wright, *Les préfets du Second Empire* (Paris: Sarmand Colin, 1973), 36–42, 158–160.

<sup>25</sup> Sudkir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: The Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 40–41.

<sup>26</sup> "Constitution de la Belgique, décrétée le 7 février 1831," in M. E. Laferrière, *Les Constitutions d'Europe et d'Amérique* (Paris: Librairie du Conseil d'État, 1869), 78.

presidents of the ordinary courts; had their own budget and had the right to elaborate their own administrative and public order regulations, within the limits of the law, etc.<sup>27</sup>

In Moldavia and Wallachia, the debates during the decade preceding the adoption of the *Law on rural and urban communes* (April 2/14, 1864) focused on the introduction of the prefect institution and, along with other similar issues, marked a departure from the regulatory regime associated with the Russian protectorate and it represented a move towards closer alignment with the institutional models of civilized Europe.<sup>28</sup> From the first days following the double election of Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Moldavia announced that the word *ispravnik* was to be removed from the administrative vocabulary and replaced by administrator. The institution would thus receive a new mission, namely “to apply with impartiality, with severity the law for all equally,” to combat the abuses and corruption, to give priority to the citizens' complaints,<sup>29</sup> even though, according to Article 47 of the Paris Convention, “the legislation now in force in the Principalities shall be maintained in respect of those provisions which are not contrary to the stipulations of this Convention.”<sup>30</sup>

The responsibility and, by extension, the power of the *ispravniks* at the local level left a strong imprint on local governance practices in the second half of the nineteenth century. After 1864, the legislation governing the organization of public administration encountered substantial resistance in displacing the traditional authority of the local “governor” or “administrator” on the basis of *the new modern role of prefect's institution*. The political parties tolerated this ambiguous situation because the prefect had a major role as the electoral agent of the ruling party<sup>31</sup> and “can be no more than an expression of the political principles

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 79–79, n. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Cuza-Vodă și oamenii săi: memoriu istoric*, fourth edition revised and added (Bucharest: G. Ioanide, 1870), 195–196; Nicolae Iorga, “Un proiect comunal al lui Ion Ghica,” *Revista istorică*, 20, no. 7–9 (1934): 209–217.

<sup>29</sup> *Acte și documente relative la istoria renascerei României*, IX, 1857–1859, published by Dimitrie A. Sturdza and J. J. Skupiewski (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice Carol Göbl, 1901), 567 (February 9/21, 1859, *Circular of the Moldavian Minister of Interior Vasile Sturdza*).

<sup>30</sup> “... la législation actuellement en vigueur dans les Principautés est maintenue dans les dispositions qui ne sont pas contraires aux stipulations de la présente Convention” (Ibid., VII, 1858–1859, (1892), 313–314; August 7/19, 1858, *Convention for the definitive organisation of the Romanian Principalities*).

<sup>31</sup> Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată*, I, 1871–1884, second edition, (Bucharest: Editura ziarului “Universul”), 187.

[and interests] of the government.”<sup>32</sup> We believe this to be the main reason why for the period 1859–1892 there is no law explicitly dedicated to the duties of the prefect and sub-prefect,<sup>33</sup> apart from some circulars of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which however, had a temporary and circumstantial role.<sup>34</sup> Instead, a certain institutional modernization was attempted, by employing a mechanism that included the prefect in a set of institutions created by law at county level: *the prefecture chancellery*, through the *Regulation on the directors of prefectures*, a function similar to the secretary general of the prefecture in France,<sup>35</sup> and the *County councils*, created by the *Law on rural and urban communes* and the *Law on county councils* (March 31/ April 12, 1864).<sup>36</sup> In the case of the first law, Article 11 seems to us essential: “The director of the prefecture countersigns all papers submitted to the prefect and is responsible” for their application,<sup>37</sup> meaning that he carries some of the legal responsibility, acting as a factor that limits all potential abusive practices. The *County councils*, composed of members elected by census vote, had a deliberative role, but the decisions taken were implemented by a *Permanent council*, chaired by the prefect, who had the final word in the implementation of the public policies at local level (Art. 3, 106).<sup>38</sup>

Despite minor legislative adjustments, until 1883 the prefect remained both an *agent of governmental power* and the *head of local administration*. In our opinion, the reasons for this duality are not to be found at the *conceptual level*, due to a supposedly poor understanding by the Romanian political elite of the civilized mechanisms of government proper to the modern state model. The draft projects of legislation on the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1866–1883), inventoried by Andrei Sora and never adopted for various reasons,<sup>39</sup> fully proves this point. We can also add to this argument the words of Titu Maiorescu, which show his deep understanding of the concept of decentralization and why it could not be

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<sup>32</sup> “... un prefect nu poate să fie decât expresiunea principiilor politice ale guvernului” (Ion C. Brătianu: *Acte și cuvântări*, IV, (1 mai 1878 – 10 aprilie 1879), published by N. Georgescu-Tistu (Bucharest, “Cartea Românească”, 1932), 226).

<sup>33</sup> Sora, *Servir l'état roumain*, 223.

<sup>34</sup> Guțan, *Istoria administrației publice*, 98–99.

<sup>35</sup> Le Clère, Wright, *Les préfets du Second Empire*, 47–51.

<sup>36</sup> “Lege pentru comunele urbane și rurale,” in Ioan M. Bujoreanu, *Collecțiune de legiurile României vechi și noi câte s-au promulgat până la finele anului 1870* (Bucharest: Noua Typographie Laboratorilor Români, 1973), 877–887; “Lege pentru înființarea consiliilor județene,” in Bujoreanu, *Collecțiune de legiurile României*, 866–876.

<sup>37</sup> “Regulament relativ la directorii de prefecturi (decret nr. 697 din 1861),” in Bujoreanu, *Collecțiune de legiurile României*, 803.

<sup>38</sup> “Lege pentru înființarea consiliilor județene,” 867, 875.

<sup>39</sup> Sora, *Servir l'état roumain*, 227–229.

applied in Romania: “What is decentralization? Decentralization means leaving in the hands of the local authority a part of the attributes of public power. Not the ministry, not the prefect to interfere in the work of the commune, but the commune itself to exercise some essential powers”<sup>40</sup> in the fields of education, churches, health and public order. However, according to Maiorescu, this change was not possible, primarily for financial reasons, because the tax system would have to be restructured so that the county and municipal councils would have the necessary financial resources. Nonetheless, this change would run counter to the provisions of the Constitution of 1866 and would undermine the government's ability to secure the resources needed to administer and develop the country.<sup>41</sup> The fact that until the *Law on county councils* from 1 March 1883, the communal institutions (County and Communal Councils) remained “forms without substance”, without their own real power and financial resources, turning the idea of administrative decentralization into a meaningless expression, is explained by power-related causes, referring to the political interests of the ruling parties and to the social interests of the Romanian elite.

### **Social legitimacies, patronage relations and political networks**

The Romanian world in the early years of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reign was socially still dominated by an elite, the descendants of the boyar families of the first half of the nineteenth century, whose power was still based on the number of estates owned and on their extremely important genealogical prestige.<sup>42</sup> The descendants of the great boyar families of the two Principalities controlled ramified networks of power centred around family ties and the administration of the villages they owned, even though they had lost their social and fiscal privileges as a result of the *Convention of Paris* (1858).<sup>43</sup> The old forms of social legitimacy were still

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<sup>40</sup> “Ce este descentralizarea? Descentralizarea voințe lăsarea în mâna autorității locale a unei părți din atributele puterii publice. Nu ministerul, nu prefectul să se amestece în treburile comunei, ci ea însăși să exercite câteva puteri esențiale”. Titu Maiorescu, *Discursuri parlamentare cu privire asupra dezvoltării politice a României sub domnia lui Carol I, II, (1870-1881)* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socec, 1897), 149.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 150–155.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Körnbach, “Studii despre limba și literatura franceză și daco-romană,” in *Călători străini despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea*, V, (1847-1851), volume coordinator Daniela Bușă (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2009), 550–551; Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altădată*, 84–85.

<sup>43</sup> George Sion, *Suvenire contimporane* (Bucharest: Tipografia Academiei Române, 1888), 52–53; Radu Rosetti, *Amintiri* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2017), 360; 379; Mihail Polihroniade, Alexandru-Christian Tell, *Domnia lui Carol I, I, 1866–1877* (Bucharest: Vremea, 1937), 88–91.

strong, preserved by new strategies of social distinction: the aristocratic way of life, luxury, kinship with foreign aristocratic families, blazons, the often unjustified claims of a noble bloodline based on historical continuity, encyclopaedic education and cultural philanthropy. Adapting rather quickly to the new state realities, this social elite of the Old Regime wanted to preserve and justify its political superiority: "as some who had previously [1859] occupied the highest offices of the state, they understood this mechanism [of government] better than the newcomers", and "an active aristocracy, subject to the common law, dedicated to public interests" would be "an incalculable good for the country."<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps, that is why certain administrative organization projects advocated by political leaders, who were committed to preserving the role of the aristocracy as ruling elite and stabilising factor in a constitutional regime endorsed a type of "regionalization." This approach proposed granting significant administrative authority *four general prefects* (administrators of four provinces in which the country was to be divided, proposal made by Barbu Catargiu, in 1862).<sup>45</sup> These proposals aimed to elevate these regional administrators to a status befitting the influential figures of the country's most prominent families, akin to "magnates". We must suspect here a basic mistrust in the county prefects, fully loyal to the Minister of the Internal Affairs in the early years of Alexandru Ioan Cuza's reign, especially from an electoral point of view, and also the fact that such position was deemed less suitable for politicians from families whose ancestors were great dignitaries in the princely *Divan* before 1856.<sup>46</sup> Vehemently criticizing the conduct of the prefects with a language similar to that used by Barbu Catargiu, Petre P. Carp did not aim to abolish the institution itself, but to limit the number of districts and, implicitly, of prefects: "in proportion to France, we should only have 10 prefectures, while we have 30."<sup>47</sup> A synthesis of these ideas was contained in a project for a law on administrative circumscriptions and organization, drafted by Petre P. Carp together with the Minister of the Internal Affairs, Theodor Rosetti (1888). It provided for the establishment

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<sup>44</sup> "... ca unii ce ocupaseră până atunci cele mai înalte slujbe ale statului, înțelegeau acest mecanism mai bine decât noii veniți" și "o aristocrație activă și supusă dreptului comun, devotată intereselor publice, este un bine necalculabil pentru țară". Barbu Katargiu, *Discursuri parlamentare (1859 – 1862 iunie 8)*, published with a preface by Petre V. Haneș (Bucharest: Minerva, 1914), 47.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 316–317.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 336–337.

<sup>47</sup> C. Gane, *P. P. Carp și locul său în istoria politică a țării*, I (Bucharest: Editura ziarului "Universul", 1936), 229.



of eleven captaincies, grouping 2-4 counties, headed by a kind of governor, *appointed by royal decree and revoked by the monarch*, with wide powers and full authority over the county prefects.<sup>48</sup> The Romanian political context of around 1890 and the constitutional provisions on the organization of the Romanian state show a unitary national state, in which the political elite wanted to avoid any “provincialization” measures that risked being interpreted as acts of “separatism”. Thus, it is quite clear that the intention of this project was not a genuine regionalization, in the absence of any provision for financial autonomy from the government. The purpose was rather to weaken the authority of the prefects as county administrators and the main electoral agents of the ruling parties, to the advantage of “governors” that the conservatives hoped King Charles I would prefer to select from the country's prestigious aristocracy.

The same tendency of the conservatives in this respect can also be seen in the everyday political life and the ministers of Internal Affairs, until 1880, continued to rely on family ties and social patronage networks in the appointment of prefects. The Barbu Catargiu cabinet (January–July 1862), the first common government of the United Principalities, and the Lascăr Catargiu cabinet (1871–1876), the first one to complete the four-year term in office, both conservative governments, excelled in this respect. Among the prefects appointed by these prime ministers, the descendants of some provincial branches of the great aristocratic families, with a certain wealth and political importance have been a component of government: Gheorghe Rosetti Roznovanu, (son of the great hetman Alexandru Roset Roznovanu, Russophile, good administrator, colonel, prefect of Neamt several times),<sup>49</sup> Alexandru C. Catargiu (son of the great boyar Costin Catargiu, former officer, prefect of Iași during the Barbu Catargiu cabinet, brother-in-law of Alexandru Catargiu, minister of finance in the same cabinet, later prefect of Ilfov during the Lascăr Catargiu cabinet),<sup>50</sup> Grigore Cantacuzino (son of the great logothete Constantin Cantacuzino, law graduate in Paris, prefect during the Barbu Catargiu cabinet, then magistrate and conservative

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 390-391.

<sup>49</sup> Gh. Ungureanu, *Familia Sion. Studiu și documente* (Iași: Institutul de Arte Grafice “N. V. Ștefăniu”, 1936), 60; Gen. R. Rosetti, “Călărașii din Valea Siretului la războiul de neamănare”, *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, third series, no. 21 (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1939): 36–37; Maiorescu, *Discursuri parlamentare*, 41; Suțu, *Iașii de odinioară*, 417.

<sup>50</sup> Gen. R. Rosetti, “Din corespondența inedită a Principelui Milan al Serbiei cu colonelul Gheorghe Catargi în timpul războiului din 1877-1878”, *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice*, third series, no. 17 (Bucharest: Imprimeria Națională, 1935–1936): 38, n. 1; Rosetti, *Dicționarul contimporanilor*, 50.

deputy),<sup>51</sup> Ion Al. Cantacuzino “Zizin” (son of the vornik Alexandru Cantacuzino Pașcanu, educated in Switzerland, prefect of Covurlui during the Barbu Catargiu cabinet),<sup>52</sup> Leon Negruzzi (son of the writer Costache Negruzzi, prominent junimist, prefect of Iași during the Lascăr Catargiu cabinet),<sup>53</sup> etc.

Instead, liberal governments, such as the Mihail Kogălniceanu cabinet (1863–1865), Ștefan Golescu cabinet (1867–1868) and Ion C. Brătianu cabinet (1876–1880), preferred prefects with military training or former magistrates, but still from prominent provincial families or characters with local intellectual prestige: Theodor Rosetti Solescu (brother of Princess Elena Cuza, founder of the Junimea Society, former judge, prefect of Vaslui during the Kogălniceanu cabinet),<sup>54</sup> Nicolae Catargiu (son of Dinu Catargiu, a boyar with no political ambitions, brother of the future Prime Minister Lascăr Catargiu, Nicolae was prefect of Iași, on May 1864 and received from the Prime Minister, M. Kogălniceanu, the delicate task to investigate Panait Balș, who was “plotting against the Union, against the prince”),<sup>55</sup> Ilariu Isvoranu (descended of an old boyar family from Little Wallachia, former magistrate, prefect of Mehedinți in 1877–1878 during Ion C. Brătianu cabinet, then liberal deputy, later passed to the conservatives),<sup>56</sup> Ștefan Sihleanu (a relative of Petru Grădișteanu, a radical liberal politician, Sihleanu belonged to an influential boyar family from Focșani, and was brought to Iași as prefect of the police in order to calm the separatist spirits, then promoted in 1867 as prefect during the Ștefan Golescu cabinet),<sup>57</sup> Pantazi Ghica (son of the logothet Dimitrie Ghica and brother of Ion Ghica, he was a member of the radical liberal party, a former prosecutor, prefect of Argeș during the government of Ștefan Golescu),<sup>58</sup> General Mihai Radu (descended from a family of small Moldavian boyars, resigned from the army in 1869, prefect of Brăila during the cabinet of Ion

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<sup>51</sup> *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1979), 147.

<sup>52</sup> Mihai Dim. Sturdza, *Un filosof francmason: Ioan Al. Cantacuzino “Zizin” (1828–1899)*, in *Familii boierești din Moldova și Țara Românească: Enciclopedie istorică, genealogică și biografică*, III, coordinator and co-author Mihai Dim. Sturdza (Bucharest: Simetria, 2014), 560.

<sup>53</sup> G. Panu, *Amintiri de la Junimea din Iași* (Iași: Editura “Remus Cioflec”, 1942), 213.

<sup>54</sup> Iacob Negruzzi, *Amintiri din Junimea*, edited edition and preface by Ioana Părvulescu (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011), 42.

<sup>55</sup> Vasile Kogălniceanu, *Acte relative la 2 mai 1864*, second edition (Bucharest: Tipografia Thoma Basilescu, 1894), 29.

<sup>56</sup> Rosetti, *Dicționarul contemporanilor*, 105.

<sup>57</sup> N. A. Bogdan, *Regele Carol I și a doua sa capitală: Relații istorico-politice scrise din inițiativa primarului Iașului G. G. Mârzescu* (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice “C. Sfetea”, 1916), 105–106.

<sup>58</sup> Viorica Diaconescu, *Pantazi Ghica: Studiu monografic* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1987), 30.

C. Brătianu),<sup>59</sup> Teodor Boian (son of the boyar Iordache Boian, former magistrate, prominent writer in Botoșani, prefect during Stefan Golescu's cabinet, then liberal mayor),<sup>60</sup> Vasile Gheorghian (law graduate, appreciated poet, brother of Metropolitan Iosif, prefect of Iași during the Ion C. Brătianu cabinet).<sup>61</sup>

The compilation of lists of prefects from 1862–1892 is necessary for the progress of research on our subject, followed by prosopographical studies. However, we can make a few observations based on the data we have: the network of prefects proves to be essential not only for the sake of administrative efficiency but also for the political stability of the cabinet, since, until 1871, most governments faced great problems in terms of parliamentary support. The parliamentary coalitions were heterogeneous, composed of parties with local branches only in Moldavia or only in Wallachia. No political party had the organizational strength to submit lists of candidates across the country. For example, one of the main conditions raised by the conservative Petre P. Carp to accept the position of the plenipotentiary minister in Vienna on behalf of the Ion C. Brătianu government was to “be given” by the government the position of prefect of Iași for one of his relatives, “as a security for the future elections.”<sup>62</sup> Under these circumstances, the network of prefects proved to be a vital political tool, not only in elections, but also as a pressure factor on deputies if they wanted to be supported in future polls.<sup>63</sup> The network of relatives in the county, grouping together aristocratic families and “men of the boyar’s house” (administrators, lawyers, land tenants), continued to play a significant role in the elections, especially since in the first and second electoral colleges the electoral propaganda was done “man to man”, the number of voters being relatively small.<sup>64</sup> Within the third college (towns), the prefect’s status as county administrator gave him the possibility to suspend undesirable mayors during elections and to effectively exert pressure on voters who paid patents on commerce or

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<sup>59</sup> Mihai Sorin Rădulescu, *Elita liberală românească, 1866–1900* (Bucharest: All, 1998), 89.

<sup>60</sup> *Dicționarul literaturii române*, 110.

<sup>61</sup> Ion Dafin, *Iașul cultural și social: Amintiri și însemnări* (Iași: Viața Românească, 1928), 49–51; *Dicționarul literaturii române*, 393.

<sup>62</sup> Titu Maiorescu, *Însemnări zilnice*, II (1881–1886), I. Rădulescu-Pogoneanu (ed.) (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Socec), 128.

<sup>63</sup> Regarding the climate in which parliamentary elections were held in the sixties and seventies and the involvement of prefects, see “Scrisoarea a unsprezecea – După luptă,” in Gheorghe Bibescu, *Culegere: Politică – religiune duel* (Bucharest: Tipografia Curții Regale, 1888), 197–224; Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea, *Guvern, prefecti și deputați: analiză electorală* (Bucharest: Tipografia „Voința Națională”, 1890).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 20.

industry. Moreover, in both Liberal and Conservative parties, there was a tendency to promote loyal and competent prefects to eligible seats in the Senate and in the House, or to the leadership of central institutions after 1870, showing the parties' organizational effort and the formation of genuine Liberal and Conservative elites as party men.<sup>65</sup>

### Conclusions

The *Law on county councils* from March 1/13, 1883, illustrates in addition to other aspects, the end of the first stage, the "adolescence" of the Romanian constitutional monarchy's political regime. At the level of party life, a new organizational culture is taking shape, focusing not only on the prestige and influence of individuals, but also on coherent and stable structures in the long run. The provisions of this law, which make the prefect what he should have been from the start, an agent of governmental power who oversees the respect of the law and the proper functioning of local institutions, reflect a *new political reality*, especially since the law comes from a Liberal cabinet. The reconfiguration of the county council, whose president assumes from the prefect the powers to implement the council's decisions, does not show, in my opinion, a maturity of local government institutions, especially since its provisions will be overturned by the conservative laws of 1892, which restore the prefect's previous authority. In fact, in the decades that followed, the local institutions, including the prefecture, will prove their incapacity, confronted with the great problems of the "glory era" of the tenant trusts, generating an exploitation of peasants that is hard to imagine. Furthermore, I believe it reflects *the decline in the political importance of the prefect*, at least for the Liberals. The party structures created in the 1880s had to respond to new challenges, related to the emergence of public opinion and the advance of participatory democracy. The era of the prefect as county "governor" and local party leader was beginning to fade towards the end of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>65</sup> George D. Nicolescu, Albert Hermely, *Deputații noștri: Biografii și portrete* (Bucharest: Editura Librăriei Carol Müller, 1896), 92–308.

# The Origins of Avram Iancu's High Brow "Heroization": Iosif Vulcan and the Journal "Familia" (1867-1872)

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**Abstract:** The present article relies on two papers by the two different authors. The former paper was a talk given in Alba Iulia, at the National Congress of Romanian Historians, in September 2022, by Floarea Pop, the latter was a speech held during the Cluj Academic Days, in October 2022 by Ioan Bolovan. In our opinion, Avram Iancu's "heroization" was initiated by the Romanian intellectual milieu of the second half of the nineteenth century. Iosif Vulcan and the journal *Familia* greatly contributed to the creation of the revolutionary leader's image as a National Hero.

**Keywords:** Avram Iancu, national hero, Iosif Vulcan, *Familia* journal

**Rezumat:** Acest articol se bazează pe două lucrări ale celor doi autori diferiți. Prima lucrare a fost o intervenție susținută la Alba Iulia, la Congresul Național al Istoricilor din România, în septembrie 2022, de Floarea Pop, cea din urmă a fost o intervenție în cadrul Zilelor Academice ale Clujului, în octombrie 2022 de Ioan Bolovan. În opinia noastră,

„eroizarea” lui Avram Iancu a fost inițiată de mediile intelectuale românești din a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea. Iosif Vulcan și revista Familia au contribuit foarte mult la crearea imaginii liderului revoluționar de Erou Național.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Avram Iancu, erou național, Iosif Vulcan, revista Familia

### Introduction

Despite the growing evidence that history, as a national pedagogy, is in decline, today, most Romanians would not dispute the idea that Avram Iancu is a National Hero. He has been represented as such by historians and writers who, over the past century and a half, have published articles, tracts, and eulogistic studies about the leader of the 1848 Revolution. Various opinion leaders in Transylvania have indelibly connected his name to the celebrations of the Revolution, pilgrimages to Țebea have been organized,<sup>1</sup> and school curricula have unquestionably legitimized his heroic status. It should be noted that, in keeping with the notion that school education can “create and shape memory,” it was compulsory, as early as the 1890s, for primary and secondary school curricula in the Old Kingdom to include topics about the 1848 Revolution in Transylvania and about its leader, Avram Iancu.<sup>2</sup> After the Great Union, school was undoubtedly the most important channel for cultivating Iancu’s image as a National Hero, and the centennial of his birth in 1924 was marked by an avalanche of books, tracts, and articles, by festivities, etc.

### The spring of 1848: hero and saviour

Popular tradition – fuelled, ever since the Revolution and the ensuing decades, by those who had encountered Iancu during the turmoil of the revolutionary events – was of particular importance in granting

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<sup>1</sup> Petre Grădișteanu, chairman of the Cultural League for the Unity of All Romanians, who attended the General Assembly of ASTRA in Sibiu on 18-19 June 1905, when the Museum of History and Ethnography was inaugurated, urged the participants in this national celebration to go to Țebea and lay flowers by Avram Iancu’s grave and Horea’s Oak Tree. In this respect, see Liviu Maior, *Asociaționism și naționalism la românii din Transilvania* (Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2022), 53. Regarding the means of legitimizing Iancu’s image as a National Hero, there are many similarities with the Old Kingdom cult of Stephen the Great, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, etc. See the excellent paper authored by Andi Mihalache, *Mănuși albe, mănuși negre. Cultul eroilor în vremea dinastiei Hohenzollern* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Mihai Chiper, *Memorie și uitare în România celei de-a doua jumătăți a secolului XIX* (Iași: Editura Universității “Alexandru Ioan Cuza,” 2015), 281 sqq.

consistency to a persistent heroic image with which Avram Iancu became associated in the minds of future generations.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the inquiry conducted in the Apuseni Mountains by Governmental Councilor Kozma Pál in June–July 1848, when Iancu had barely begun to be perceived as the undisputed national leader, provides sufficient examples in this regard.<sup>4</sup> The image of the saviour represents a fundamental mythological unit that collective consciousness has repeatedly tapped into in times of crisis throughout history. During the Revolution of 1848, the Saviour was not just an individual (politician, prophet, poet, etc.), but could also be a collective entity (the elite, the people, etc.).<sup>5</sup> Both of these facets of the Saviour prevailed in the social imaginary during the 1848 Revolution in Transylvania. As is well known, the political myth of the Saviour tends to be defined by a major function with which the hero is provisionally invested, in response to something that he is expected to accomplish, to certain demands or ideals.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the image of the Saviour varies in time and space, hinging on the missions the masses expect him to fulfil. The first months of the Romanian revolution in Transylvania witnessed a great range of behavioural attitudes among the elites and the population at large. The expectations of the people were great, and their patience was nearly exhausted. A direct consequence of this was the way in which the image of the Saviour was projected, in certain regions, unto real individuals, some of whom were later validated as unquestionable leaders of the revolution: Avram Iancu, Alexandru Papiu-Ilarian, Ioan Buteanu, Simion Balint and others.<sup>7</sup>

An emblematic figure of the Romanian revolution in Transylvania, Avram Iancu achieved, as American historian Keith Hitchins subtly notes, a remarkable “synthesis of intelligence and idealism, coupled with the harsh force of the outraged masses.”<sup>8</sup> Avram Iancu’s role in organizing and leading the people of the Western Carpathians (“Apuseni” Mountains) – traditionally referred to as “moți”

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, see Romulus Felea, *Avram Iancu în tradiția orală a moșilor: la 120 de ani de la moartea eroului*, a volume edited by Ioan Felea and Virgiliu Florea, Foreword by Acad. Ștefan Pascu (Cluj-Napoca: s.n., 1992), 10 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> For a broader overview, see Gelu Neamțu, Ioan Bolovan (eds.), *Revoluția de la 1848 în Transilvania. Ancheta Kozma din Munții Apuseni* (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Simona Nicoară, Toader Nicoară, *Mentalități colective și imaginar social. Istoria și noile paradigme ale cunoașterii* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană - Mesagerul, 1996), 181.

<sup>6</sup> Raoul Girardet, *Mituri și mitologii politice* (Iași: Institutul European, 1997), 63.

<sup>7</sup> Liviu Maior, *1848-1849. Români și unguri în revoluție* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1998), 214.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Hitchins, “Avram Iancu și revoluția europeană de la 1848,” in Hitchins, *Conștiință națională și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania (1700-1868)* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1987), 154.

(German: Motzen) – as early as the spring of 1848, increased after the bloodshed in Mihalț from the beginning of June.<sup>9</sup> The statements given by several witnesses in the Kozma inquiry outlined the image of Iancu as a saviour in whom the people placed their entire trust. For instance, witness 158, Miheț Gheorghe from Sohodol, stated that Avram Iancu was “so eagerly obeyed by the people, almost as eagerly as they would obey Jesus Christ.”<sup>10</sup> His very gestures and deeds served as incentives for the masses to believe that Iancu was a providential leader, the saviour that history had brought forth to fulfil their dreams. According to the statement of witness 31 in the Kozma inquiry, the pub keeper Szántó Krisztina, a customer had said that during a popular assembly held in Câmpeni, in mid-June 1848, Avram Iancu had “persuaded the people that he had a big gold cross on his chest.”<sup>11</sup> The reference to the Christian symbol was not fortuitous; the cross was supposed to reinforce the saviour’s power to eradicate evil, to be a symbol of light overcoming darkness, to enhance his image as a Hero!

### **The Pantheon of Iosif Vulcan**

Avram Iancu’s commitment to defending the ideals of the Romanian nation in Transylvania marked an important moment and can be viewed as an example of heroism. Iancu played a key role in the struggle for the rights of the Motzen, both during the revolution and afterwards, epitomizing the battle for maintaining national identity and rights in the collective mind-set. That is why he transformed from a protector of the Motzen into a guiding beacon for the entire Romanian nation. He made a major contribution to the 1848–1849 Revolution in Transylvania, yet it is equally significant that he came to be considered a national hero and one of the most illustrious figures in Romanian history. Without a doubt, this revolution shaped the the National Pantheon to a great extent. Moreover, some of the revolutionaries became “subjects of historical mythologization.”<sup>12</sup> Avram Iancu could not avoid undergoing such a

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<sup>9</sup> Hitchens, “Avram Iancu,” 155; Neamțu, “Evenimentele de la Mihalț din vara anului 1848,” in *Istoria României. Pagini transilvane*, Dan Berindei (ed.) (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 1994), 281.

<sup>10</sup> Neamțu, Bolovan (eds.), *Revoluția de la 1848*; moreover, in the findings of the inquiry, there is a reference to Avram Iancu as a potential king of the Romanians. See Gelu Neamțu, “Aspirații daco-române reflectate în documentele unei anchete din Munții Apuseni la 1848,” *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Historia* 33, no. 1 (1988): 82.

<sup>11</sup> Neamțu, Bolovan (eds.), *Revoluția de la 1848*.

<sup>12</sup> Cătălina Mihalache, “Eroii,” in *Enciclopedia imaginariilor din România*, general ed. Corin Braga, vol. III, *Imaginar istoric*, ed. Sorin Mitu (Iași: Polirom, 2020), 259. See also Ioan Stanomir, *Așteptând revoluția. Pașoptismul și vocile sale* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2019), especially the second part of the book.



transformation, and as a result, his figure became emblematic for all Romanians, because the leader of the Motzen "symbolizes an implacable historical destiny, as well as the power to endure through difficult times. This is the destiny of a betrayed, subjugated, deceived nation, which nonetheless bravely faces the future out of a belief that justice will never perish. That is why Avram Iancu is the luminous beacon enabling our history to overcome its frailties, stepping through the great gate of consecration" (our translation)<sup>13</sup>.

Iosif Vulcan authored the first hagiographic material focused entirely on Avram Iancu: the article published on the front page of the journal *Familia*, issue no. 6 (1867), and included, two years later, in the work entitled *Panteonul român* [The Romanian Pantheon]. In the latter, expanded text, Vulcan presented a short biography of Iancu and his role in the crucial events of 1848–1849. To the best of our knowledge, he was the first to use the epithets "Hero" and "king of the highlands" for the leader of the Motzen:

"I have placed the hero of 1848, the king of the highlands, an outspoken patriot, the purest Romanian at the forefront of this journal. Look at his forehead, which was once so serene, how it crumbles under the burden of suffering; look at his heart, broken not by his own sorrows but by the sorrows of his nation. The only thing he ever loved his entire life was his nation!" (our translation)<sup>14</sup>

The context in which the article about Avram Iancu appeared in February 1867 was not a haphazard one, for it was clearly associated with the political debates in Hungary and Transylvania, which foretold the establishment of Austro-Hungarian dualism. Iosif Vulcan, who resided in the capital of Hungary at that time, was kept abreast of those developments and fully realized what the union of Transylvania with Hungary would entail for all the Romanians. Who else but Avram Iancu could best express, in symbolical terms, the Romanians' opposition to the upcoming revocation of Transylvania's autonomy and its union with Hungary? That is why the article published by Iosif Vulcan, foregrounding Avram Iancu as a National Hero, had profound anti-dualist political implications. We strongly believe that Vulcan's article had a tremendous impact on the Romanian intellectuals in Transylvania and drew the elite's attention to the situation of the Hero. We would also like to advance the

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<sup>13</sup> See Mircea Popa, *Avram Iancu făuritor de istorie națională* (Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2022), 293.

<sup>14</sup> See *Familia*, no. 6 (5/17 February 1867): 61 sqq.

idea that Iosif Vulcan's public extolment of Avram Iancu had consequences for Iancu himself, who was thus "avenged" for his fifteen-year marginalization in the public sphere. He was personally convinced that this political moment for his return to public life was an auspicious one. He may also have been encouraged to do so by his friends in the Romanian county of Zarand, where he had spent most of his time during those years. This is attested by the fact that only several weeks after Vulcan's article came out in *Familia*, Iancu wrote a letter to Emperor Francis Joseph, requesting financial aid to cope with material hardships. The letter, drafted on and dated 24 March 1867 in Hălmagiu, was never sent to the emperor, as one of the foremost specialists on the modern history of Transylvania has shown, but "reflects the tragic destiny of its author."<sup>15</sup> Our assumption that he may have been compelled to re-enter public life at the behest of a Romanian leader from Hălmagiu is supported by the fact that the next article about Iancu (published in the journal *Familia*, in 1871) was related to the presence of an important Romanian intellectual from Arad (Dionisie Pășcuțiu)<sup>16</sup> in that village from Zarand, in the autumn of that year. Therefore, it is quite possible that one of the people who cared about Iancu, a local leader who probably lived in Hălmagiu, persuaded our Hero to draft that letter to the emperor. Staying true to his beliefs that the monarch would do nothing for the rights of the Motzen, he did not desire personal gains before his nation secured the rights for which he had fought in the revolution, which is why he did not send the letter. Nevertheless, he provided contentment to those who had expressed compassion for the state it was in.

Let us see what "heroism" truly meant, in the context in which Iosif Vulcan published his 1867 article about Avram Iancu. A very handy source is the dictionary compiled just a few years afterwards by August Treboniu Laurian and Ioan C. Massimu, who were entrusted with this task by the Romanian Academy and who succeeded in creating the very first complete dictionary of the Romanian language. The aforementioned dictionary's definition of "hero will help us gain a clearer understanding of the attributes Iosif Vulcan ascribed to the revolutionary leader: "*HERO*, m. n.: a strong, powerful man, willing to face terrible dangers in order to

<sup>15</sup> Liviu Maior, *Avram Iancu. Scrisori* (Cluj: Dacia, 1972), 118 sqq.

<sup>16</sup> Dionisie Pășcuțiu (1825–1902) was a complex, yet contradictory personality, with a broad intellectual horizon. A professor in Beiuș and Oradea, a priest, and a lawyer, Pășcuțiu was a distinguished philologist, linguist and ethnologist who was held in high regard by his contemporaries. Using scientific arguments, he upheld the thesis of the Romanians' continuity and of Romanian as a Neo-Latin language, see Dumitru Tomoni, "Dionisie Pășcuțiu (1825–1902). Contribuții la cunoașterea lui," *Arca* [Arad], no. 1–3 (2017): 131–138 and Octavian Lupaș, "Dionisie Pășcuțiu – omul și opera," *Hotarul* [Arad], 1, no. 3–4 (July–August, 1933): 10.

reach a higher goal; a great, illustrious man; the protagonist of a poem, a historical event or a piece of fiction; ancient heroes were demigods; the most famous among the ancient heroes was Hercules; not all heroes can match up to Hercules" (our translation)<sup>17</sup>. Given this definition, we can acquire a better understanding Avram Iancu's heroic features, as Iosif Vulcan highlighted them both in this first article and in the subsequent press "campaign" to glorify the leader of the Motzen, particularly after his death on 11 September 1872.

### **The journal *Familia*: disseminating the myth of Avram Iancu**

In what follows, we will provide a detailed account of the articles on the National Hero published in *Familia* from 1867 to 1872. Two of these were written by the founder of the journal (Iosif Vulcan) and two by Dionisie Pășcuțiu in 1871. Analysing the articles authored by Iosif Vulcan, we have noticed a certain evolution in the way in which Avram Iancu was presented over the course of the five years under scrutiny here. In the article published in issue no. 6 of the journal *Familia* in 1867, which was included two years later in *Panteonul român* [The Romanian Pantheon], Iosif Vulcan provided a brief biography of Iancu, emphasizing his role in the crucial events of 1848. In the second article Vulcan published at the time of Avram Iancu's death, the author insisted on the moral duty his contemporaries and future generations had towards a man who was "a national treasure and a sublime martyr."<sup>18</sup> The third article we have analysed, published in issue no. 38 of 17/29 September 1872 (not signed but, considering its style, definitely written by Vulcan), is a short account of Avram Iancu's burial and is infused with admiration for the leader of the Motzen and for what he meant for posterity. In the work *Panteonul român*, the author moves from the general to the particular, employing the concept of "great man" and investing it with moral value – respect (the idea of respect and admiration for these great men). After this methodological introduction, the argument proceeds with a particularization/individualization of this concept by outlining the

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<sup>17</sup> See *Dictionariulu Limbei Romane, dupo insarcinarea data de Societatea Academica Romana*, compiled by A.T. Laurian and J.C. Massimu (Bucharest, 1871). A quick look at the meaning of this term will show that it has not changed much over the course of a century and a half: "HERO, heroes, m. n. 1. A person of exceptional bravery and courage in battle, displaying selflessness in challenging circumstances or in the line of duty. ♦ A soldier who dies on the battlefield. 2. The protagonist of a literary work. ♦ The main character of an event; a person who, in particular circumstances, becomes particularly notable. 3. (In Greek and Roman mythology) A demigod, a person who is the offspring a deity and a mortal, endowed with superhuman powers, or who has become famous for certain outstanding feats. – From the Fr. *héros*, Lat. *heros*." See *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române* (second edition, revised and expanded) (Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> *Familia*, no. 37 (10/22 September 1872): 440.

example of Avram Iancu. The article focuses on Iancu's biography, on his actions in 1848, and on the Motzen leader's state of mind during the final years of his life. Besides including the text of 1867 in *Panteonul român*, Vulcan added a few sentences at the end of the chapter in which he lamented the hero's state in those years. *Panteonul român* definitively and profoundly shaped Iancu's place in the history of the Transylvanian Romanians up until the Union, and he remained entrenched in the memory of future generations as "the hero of 1848, an outspoken patriot, the purest Romanian." In Iosif Vulcan's view, "Iancu lives on, and his memory will last forever in the hearts of Romanians. The plains and mountains of Transylvania will forever echo with the songs sung to glorify his deeds, and the tradition of speaking with admiration about the highland Hero of 1848 will be passed down from generation to generation, to our great grandchildren."<sup>19</sup>

Published upon Iancu's death, the text that appeared in issue no. 37 of *Familia* on 10/22 September 1872 amounted to a manifesto, or an impassioned plea to preserve the image of Iancu, who was dubbed "a true martyr," in living memory. Entitled "The Burial of Avram Iancu," the article featured in issue 38 of 17/29 September 1872 made a similar argument. Vulcan's rhetoric is similar in the two texts, although we must note that the article announcing Iancu's death presses much more emphatically for maintaining his image alive, as "the expression of a high idea, of an age-old desire, which will never be abandoned by his nation." Moreover, the author's admission that his hand was shaking as he wrote about this sad news speaks volumes about the impact that learning about the death of "the faultless hero of 1848, king of the highlands" had on him.<sup>20</sup> This shows the author's strong affective engagement with this idea, as he urged and implored all Romanians to mobilize themselves and build an imposing monument for the National Hero. What is also very important, in our view, is Vulcan's appeal to his compatriots to make annual pilgrimages to Iancu's grave: "Let this grave be a place of pilgrimage for us, Romanians, where we should all come, from every corner of the world, year after year, to bring homage to the spirit of he who is sleeping his eternal sleep here, and let us swear by the cross of his headstone to love our mother tongue and our homeland."<sup>21</sup> Fortunately, Vulcan's appeal was heeded without fail by his contemporaries and by succeeding generations, particularly considering that, up until 1918, the pilgrimages to Țebea had profound national and anti-dualist implications.

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<sup>19</sup> Iosif Vulcan, *Panteonul român. Portretele și biografiile celebrităților române*, modernized and annotated edition by Cristian Bădiliță (ed.), *Foreword* by Bishop Virgil Bercea, *Afterword* and *Timeline* by Ioan F. Pop (Bucharest: Vremea, 2021), 101.

<sup>20</sup> *Familia*, no. 37 (10/22 September 1872): 440.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

Most of the annual festivities dedicated to the Revolution included a pilgrimage to Țebea. Naturally, the fact that large numbers of Romanians went to lay flowers by Iancu's grave and Horea's oak tree was not to the liking of the Hungarian authorities, which

"were on the alert every time and year after year. The official press tarnished the image of the revolutionary leader. This had no effect whatsoever on the Romanians. Their attachment to the memory of the revolutionary leader never subsided. Quite the contrary, the number of those who attended his 'commemoration' steadily increased despite the punitive measures taken against them."<sup>22</sup>

The most notorious episode in which the authorities of the dualist state punished the pilgrims to Țebea occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. On 31 December 1899, three young students from the University of Cluj (Coriolan Steer, George Novacovici, and Ioan Scurtu) placed a wreath of laurels with the Romanian tricolour and the inscription "Rest in peace! We are watching! The Romanian youths of Avram Iancu." They sang Romanian patriotic songs, together with the hundreds of Motzen who attended service in the church there. The Hungarian authorities intervened before long. Less than two weeks later, an inquiry began, after which a lawsuit was brought against the three students, who were thus expelled from university and thrown in jail after years of interrogations.<sup>23</sup> As was to be expected, the news of the trial, intensely discussed in *Tribuna* and other Romanian newspapers at the beginning of 1900, spurred a wave of outrage and discontent throughout the Land of Zarand. The pious reverence with which the memory of Iancu's deeds was preserved in the area was clearly evinced by the people's belief that Iancu's spirit lived on among them, as they whispered:

"Well, now! And who could stop us from taking wreaths of flowers to our dearly departed!? Do those who live off our backs really not know that our people believe Iancu to be alive and to return from his grave from time to time?"<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Maior, "Avram Iancu în 'Panteonul' românesc," Foreword to Silviu Dragomir, *Avram Iancu. O viață de erou*, introductory study and editorial note by Ioan Bolovan and Sorin Șipoș (eds.) (Cluj-Napoca: Școala Ardeleană, 2022), 11 sqq.

<sup>23</sup> For further details, see Neamțu, "Procesul pentru cununa de pe mormântul lui Avram Iancu, 1900-1902," *Sargetia*, 9 (1972): 149-168.

<sup>24</sup> Ioachim Lazăr, Nicolae Marcel Morar, *Avram Iancu în memoria posterității* (Deva: EMIA, 2008), 39.

The documents we have consulted for this paper suggest that Vulcan intended to present Avram Iancu as a role model and as a great man. Describing his moral qualities and physical stature, this portrait emphasised his aspirations, his love and care for the Romanian nation and his anguish over having failed to accomplish these goals. In *Panteonul...*, Avram Iancu is presented by the author as a man of action and "an outspoken patriot, the purest Romanian." As seen by Iosif Vulcan, the portrait that emerges is that of Iancu as a great man, whose heart was broken not by his own sorrows, but by the sorrows of his nation. This is the image we may encounter in the article included in issue 38 of the journal *Familia*, published on 17/29 September 1872, which begins with Iosif Vulcan invoking "The great and unfortunate Avram Iancu." The word *unfortunate* is resumed in the following lines, which depict Iancu's noble soul. The text implies that he continuously strived to promote the goals of the Romanian nation, placing those goals above all else.<sup>25</sup> The sufferings of the Romanian people kept him in a state of perpetual agitation and unrest, a sentiment also acknowledged by his contemporaries. Some of them held him in very high regard and consistently attempted to alleviate the situation of the Hero.<sup>26</sup>

Iosif Vulcan painted a physical and moral portrait of Iancu: a young man with a pleasant countenance, fair haired, with a russet-gold moustache and beard, with a kind and generous heart, a noble spirit, a yearning for freedom and for the independence of his country and nation, with vast knowledge and genuine talent, which meant that he was liked by everyone. This utterly positive image continues in the following pages, which outline the profile of a warrior who fought "to deliver the Romanian nation from the feudal yoke." Of course, Iancu had to take part in the national unrest of 1848 and to be among those who led the Romanian nation. He was very popular among the Motzen and was well known all across the country for his inspiring ideas. He is depicted as a model to be followed by his people, and he taught his people about freedom and equality based on national principles. Because he protested against the union of Transylvania with Hungary and supported the cause of the Romanians, Iancu was very much loved by his people.<sup>27</sup> Iosif Vulcan resumed the reference to Iancu's unconditional commitment to the cause of his nation at the end of the article "The Burial of Iancu," published in issue 38 of *Familia*, on 17/29 September 1872. In this text, he

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<sup>25</sup> Vulcan, *Panteonul român*, 101.

<sup>26</sup> Iosif Sterca Șuluțiu, *Biografia lui Avram Iancu* (Sibiu: Tiparul Tipografiei Arhidiecezane, 1897), 4.

<sup>27</sup> Vulcan, *Panteonul român*, 101.

stated that "He has taught us how to love our nation, without interest in any material gains, without aspiring to laurels, and without any other desire than to ensure its happiness."<sup>28</sup> In the previous article, in issue 37 of *Familia*, on 10/22 September 1872, in which Vulcan announced the death of the Hero, Iancu was actually seen as more than a hero, because his name could turn into a "political goal, the goal of the Romanian nation this side of the Carpathians, the flag that will rally together all true Romanians with an authentic sense of self-sacrifice, a national cult that will be revered and esteemed by all future generations."<sup>29</sup> The idea of a one-of-a-kind model was espoused in *Panteonul*, and was resumed with even greater clarity and depth in the following passage in this article: "The Romanian nation has had just one Iancu, not more. Of course, we love him, of course we worship his memory!" This is the image of a unique national hero, and perhaps there would be more if every "son of our motherland had nourished in their chest this love of language, freedom and country." This passage ends with the following reflection: "If we had more untainted figures like Iancu, then the state of the nation would not be so deplorable." However, Iancu was the only one and, inevitably, he sank into dismay. Even though he lived for a few more years, he suffered like a "true martyr" for the sins and wrongdoings of others. He was insulted several times but did not hold a grudge against his maligners. His flute was his solace throughout this time, and he played it to those he loved. Vulcan considered that this unique souvenir of "our sublime martyr" should be preserved in perpetuity in a national museum. As previously established, the value of heroism resides, first and foremost, in one's capacity for self-sacrifice, in one's selfless potential to commit wholeheartedly to the cause for which they are fighting. Naturally, we should also take into account the "existence of a *heroic mystique*, fuelled by faith in God, outside of which the absolute is unlikely to exist. It alone grants heroism undeniable moral value. Thanks to this mystique, heroism and holiness overlap to such an extent that it becomes impossible to tell where heroism ends and holiness begins, where selflessness lies and where love of God resides."<sup>30</sup>

Iosif Vulcan went on to urge Romanians everywhere to promptly erect a beautiful funeral monument at the site where Iancu's remains laid to rest, so that this monument could "let the world know that the love and admiration for Iancu will never vanish from the Romanians hearts!" That tombstone was to become a place of pilgrimage for all Romanians

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<sup>28</sup> *Familia*, no. 38 (17/29 September 1872): 452.

<sup>29</sup> *Familia*, no. 37 (10/22 September 1872): 440.

<sup>30</sup> Ioan Opreș, "Eroi și sfinți," *Revista Teologică*, 31, no. 11-12 (1941), 510.

across the world. They were to go there, year after year, to pay homage to him and pledge, by his grave, that they would forever cherish their language and their country. Iancu is presented as a model of love for language and country, he epitomizes love for one's nation, he is a beacon for all Romanians. The article ends with an imperative message: "Let us forever worship the memory of this great martyr amongst our martyrs!"<sup>31</sup>

Besides the article written by Iosif Vulcan in 1867 and the two articles about Iancu's death that were published in September 1872, there was another important moment related to the national hero in the journal *Familia*, in the autumn of 1871, when two articles about the leader of the Motzen were published. In issues no. 36 of 5/17 September 1871 and 37 of 12/24 September 1871, the journal included, starting on the second page of each issue, a text written by Dionisie Pășcuțiu, entitled "Avram Iancu. His State Now and His Visions." A noteworthy scholar from Arad, Pășcuțiu described to the readers his chance encounter with Avram Iancu. The first instalment of the text focused on the author's meeting with the Hero in Hălmagiu, on 2 September 1871, and reproduced their conversations. Although he did not fully understand Iancu, Dionisie Pășcuțiu had the merit of bringing Iancu back into the attention of the Romanian public, four years after the eulogistic article Iosif Vulcan published in *Familia* and two years after *Panteonul...* was printed. The second instalment called for all those who identified as Romanians to organize a public fundraising in Transylvania in order to buy a house for Iancu and to make sure that he was well taken care of. The author expressed his foreboding that the hero's life expectancy was not too long: "Gentlemen and brothers! Let us take note that this rogue and beggar of the Romanian nation is bound to perish sooner than later. And won't we have qualms of conscience that we have rewarded his self-sacrifice to the nation by forsaking him and treating him with disdain?"<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, a mere one year after this honest and impassioned plea, the National Hero passed away without any public campaign to protect and support him having been organized.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, since our research is still in its early stages, we will outline a few preliminary findings. The texts about Avram Iancu written by Iosif Vulcan and published in the journal *Familia* from 1867 to 1872, are similar with respect to their discourse, and certain terms or phrases are reiterated

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<sup>31</sup> *Familia*, no. 37 (10/22 September 1872): 440.

<sup>32</sup> *Familia*, no. 37 (12/24 September 1871): 435.



or resumed through a series of synonyms. For instance, the work *Panteonul...* outlines the image of Iancu as a great, unsullied model to be followed: "a man of action," "an outspoken patriot," "the purest Romanian," "the highland Hero of 1848." The same image is featured in the article published in issue 37 of 1872: "the faultless hero of 1848, king of the highlands," "a great genius, an untarnished man, with an admirable character," "the illustrious," "untarnished character." The word *great* is also used in the article from issue 38/1872 of the journal *Familia*, in the following phrases: "The great and unfortunate Avram Iancu," "the glorious," "His noble soul." Every article is concerned with promoting the national cause. *Panteonul...* depicts the image of Iancu as a man who was always devoted to his people and "whose heart was broken not by his own sorrows but by the sorrows of his nation." He "yearned for freedom and wanted to achieve independence for his country and his nation," striving to "deliver his nation from the feudal yoke." In the articles that came out in 1872, Avram Iancu is seen as a martyr of the national cause: "one of our dearest martyrs," "a true martyr," "our sublime martyr," "a great martyr" (no. 37/1872); "the glorious martyr," "the true martyr of the Romanian cause," "our never-to-be-forgotten martyr" (no. 38). This article also includes the syntagm "sublime apostle of the Romanian cause."

Among those who wrote about Iancu's demise in the autumn of 1872, alongside George Barițiu, Iosif Vulcan penned some of the most inspired thoughts.<sup>33</sup> Evincing great literary talent, Vulcan promoted a cult for the National Hero. After Iancu's death, Romanian memoirists and historians started regularly publishing texts about his role in the revolution, consecrating his place in the National Pantheon.<sup>34</sup> In this first attempt to elaborate on how Iosif Vulcan and the journal he launched contributed to validating Avram Iancu's image as a National Hero in the pan-Romanian public space, we propose the thesis that the illustrious scholar from Oradea was the first to start a genuine hagiographic project in the Transylvanian press, with a major impact on generations to come. In the weeks that followed, the journal *Familia* launched a campaign to eulogize the National Hero through articles written by Iosif Vulcan and other contributors. Issue no. 39 began with a poem entitled "Horea's Oak Tree" by Iosif Vulcan, most likely in order to lay the groundwork for issue no. 40, where Ion Tripa published the poem "At Iancu's Grave."

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<sup>33</sup> Pompiliu Teodor, *Avram Iancu în memorialistică* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1972), 23.

<sup>34</sup> Maior, *Asociaționism și naționalism*, 57; see also Teodor, *Avram Iancu în memorialistică*, and especially *Memorialistica revoluției de la 1848 în Transilvania*, introductory study, notes, and glossary by Nicolae Bocșan and Valeriu Leu (eds.) (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1988), 74.

Issue 41 of 8/20 October 1872 reproduced, on the front page, the article "Iancu's Battles" that Aron Crainic (a self-proclaimed brother in arms of Iancu's) had initially published in the Bucharest newspaper *Românul*, as well as Alexandru Papiu Ilarian's reply to that material. The first instalment of a text entitled "Avram Iancu and the Gathering on Thomas Sunday and That of 3/15 May 1848" was printed on the third page of issue no. 42 of 15/27 October 1872. The following instalments appeared in issues 43, 45 and 47, which reproduced entire excerpts from the second volume of Alexandru Papiu Ilarian's *Istoria românilor din Dacia Superioară* [The History of Romanians in Dacia Superior]. Despite the fact that these texts in the journal *Familia* did not focus exclusively on Iancu, given that they described the revolutionary events of the months of March-May 1848, the Hero was presented in the context of several such episodes. The text included in issue 49 of 3/15 December 1872 comprised a few lines about the memorial service for the repose of Avram Iancu, held underneath Horea's oak tree in Tebea, by the Hero's grave. It is not our intention to analyse the articles that appeared in the autumn of 1872, after Iancu's death, or those that were printed in 1873 or in the subsequent years, until the journal ceased publication. We do believe, however, that Iosif Vulcan and the journal he founded and led until 1906 held a privileged place among the cultural actors that launched and cultivated the image of the National Hero.

# Journalist, Spy, Propagandist: About Vándory Lajos and His Activity in Romania (1876–1885)\*

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**Abstract:** Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the relations between Austria-Hungary and Romania experienced several delicate episodes, caused by the diametrically opposed interests of the two sides regarding the specific realities of South-Eastern Europe. The rulers in Vienna and especially those in Budapest could only see the Romanian state as an obstacle to their plans, and therefore tried to quickly learn and decipher the diplomatic and political intentions and initiatives of the Romanian decision-makers. On different occasions, in order to obtain the necessary information, they resorted to setting up and supporting networks of influencers, propagandists and spies, both in Transylvania and across the Carpathians. The present article aims to add details to the depiction of an interesting figure, Vándory Lajos, who, according to the press of the time and several archival documents, was one of those who operated within the territory of the Romanian state as a spy, under the cover of working as a journalist. At various times, by his actions, he contributed to the further straining of the already problematic Romanian-Hungarian relations.

**Keywords:** Vándory Lajos, Romanian-Hungarian relations, press, propaganda, espionage

**Rezumat:** Spre sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea, relațiile dintre Austro-Ungaria și România au cunoscut mai multe episoade delicate, provocate de interesele diametral opuse ale celor două părți cu privire la realitățile specifice sud-estului Europei. Conducătorii de la

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\* Gazetar, spion, propagandist: despre Vándory Lajos și activitatea sa în România (1876-1885).

Viena și mai ales de la Budapesta nu puteau vedea în statul român decât un obstacol în calea planurilor lor, încercând, în consecință, să cunoască și să descifreze cât mai repede intențiile și inițiativele diplomatice și politice ale factorilor decidenți din România. Pentru obținerea informațiilor necesare, au făcut apel în diverse rânduri la constituirea și sprijinirea unor rețele de agenți de influență, propagandiști și spioni, atât în Transilvania, cât și peste Carpați. Prin intermediul textului nostru, încercăm să contribuim la completarea imaginii unui interesant personaj, Vándory Lajos, care, așa cum arată presa vremii și documentele de arhivă, a fost unul din cei care au activat pe teritoriul statului român în calitate de spion, sub acoperirea îndeletnicirii de gazetar. În diferite momente, prin acțiunile sale, a contribuit la tensionarea suplimentară a relațiilor româno-maghiare, oricum problematice.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Vándory Lajos, relații româno-maghiare, presă, propagandă, spionaj.

At the end of the 1870s, in the context of the reactivation of the Eastern Question and the foreshadowing of important political changes in the south-eastern part of the European continent, the attention of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in this area was mainly focused on the Romanian state, whose actions had often been seen, since the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866), as dangerous for the European order of that time. The correlation of these actions with the increasingly determined affirmation of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania, as well as several contacts with various subversive and revolutionary structures in this part of the continent<sup>1</sup> were considered to be the warning signals that predicted the possible organization of larger-scale enterprises that would ultimately destabilize the Dual Monarchy. As a somewhat natural consequence, the period in question was marked by an effervescent espionage activity carried out in Transylvania and across the territory of the Romanian state. These endeavours were coordinated by Vienna and Budapest, especially after Romania gained its independence following its participation in the conflict between the Russian and Ottoman Empires in 1877-1878.

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<sup>1</sup> There were close connections with certain Bulgarian revolutionary structures and even diplomatic and political contacts with Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia. Vasile V. Russu, *Viața politică în România (1866-1871)*, vol. I – *De la domnia pământească la prințul străin* (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2001), 203-205; Iulian Oncescu, *România în politica orientală a Franței (1866-1878)*. Second edition revised and added (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2010), 169-170; N. Iorga, *Istoria Românilor*, vol. X<sub>1</sub> – *Întregitorii*. Volume cared by Georgeta Filitti, Gheorghe Buzatu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2011), 37-38.

The pressing need for detailed and relevant information felt by the decision-makers in the two Danubian capitals reflected the wider understanding that the young Romanian state was perceived as an immediate danger to the interests of Austria-Hungary. This danger was sensed and understood both in Vienna, which wanted to exert its influence in South-Eastern Europe and to control the European Danube Commission,<sup>2</sup> and in Budapest, which was increasingly concerned about the extent and the consolidation of the Romanian national movement in Transylvania. After all, the very attitude of many of the Transylvanian Romanians during the War of Independence was a major cause of anxiety for the Hungarian authorities, which tried, after 1878, to react on multiple levels in order to obtain the needed information.

Under various covers, agents of Vienna and Budapest were present both in Transylvania and south of the Carpathians. Their missions included: to follow the leaders of the Romanian national movement in the region, as well as the Romanians who had taken refuge in Romania, to collect data on the Romanian irredentist movement, to establish useful contacts and connections in different social groups, to influence the Romanian public opinion on certain political, economic, diplomatic issues, etc. The literature currently available, along with a number of archival documents retrieved in recent decades, highlight the effectiveness and adaptability of some of these agents.<sup>3</sup> Among those who distinguished themselves on the so-called “invisible front”, there is a character that, more or less by chance, also plays a part in the history of the Romanian and Hungarian press.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See, for this aspect, the considerations expressed by Ion Bulei, “De la Chestiunea Dunării la Tratatul cu Puterile Centrale”, *Istorie și Civilizație*, 4/32 (May 2012): 5–9; 4/33 (June 2012): 10–13. For the Austro-Hungarian tendencies in this regard in the early 1880s, see also Mihaela Damean, *Personalitatea omului politic Dimitrie A. Sturdza* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2012), 93–98.

<sup>3</sup> Probably the best known such agent, in terms of the historiographical coverage and documentation provided by the archives in recent decades, is Friedrich Lachmann, whose name is often linked to various information regarding the situation of Mihai Eminescu. See: Luana Popa, “Gazeta Transilvaniei, oglindă a războiului pentru independența de stat a României”, *Cumidava*, 10 (1977): 53–71; Mircea Gherman, “Consecințe politice ale războiului de independență asupra luptei de eliberare națională a românilor transilvăneni”, *Cumidava*, 10 (1977): 97–120.

<sup>4</sup> Despite the existence of increasingly consistent approaches, including the publication, in the last two decades, of studies and books that can be considered of reference for the knowledge of the Hungarian-language press, it must be said that, at the level of our historiography, we still know quite little about the Hungarian community’s gazettes, the personalities involved and their overall significance within the Romanian modernity. See, in this regard, the important and useful contributions of Hilda Hencz, *Magyarok román világban. A Kárpátokon kívüli román térségben élő magyarok és a bukaresti magyar sajtó (1860-*

The name of this character is Vándory Lajos and, from 1876 until 1885, he was the editor-in-chief and owner of the periodical *Bukaresti Híradó*, a rather important member of the Hungarian Association in Bucharest, a press correspondent for several Hungarian newspapers and also, as a result of these attributes, an acquaintance of some of the leading Romanian politicians of the time.

The association between the editor of the second Hungarian-language newspaper in Romania and the espionage activity that he carried out under the coordination of the Budapest authorities was not accidental. It was one of the best covers for his infiltration in the Romanian capital, within the Bucharest society of the time.

Also, various testimonies of that time, together with other writings, contributed to the shaping of a certain image both for the gazette in question and for its enterprising editor. In this context, we must mention several observations made at that time, also drawn from newspapers.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the German-language periodical *Politik* in Prague, quoted by George Barițiu's gazette *Observatoriul* from Sibiu, reported, in August 1878, that Budapest's plans at the time sought to "win Romania for the Hungarian politics and to thus mercilessly sacrifice the interests of three million Romanians living in Transylvania, the Banat, and Bucovina."<sup>6</sup> As part of the moves carried out, there were mentions of the potential involvement of Romania's diplomatic agent in Vienna, Iancu Bălăceanu, described as "a very suspect person because of his completely troubled financial situation and known as a devoted partisan of Count Andrásy." According to the same Prague periodical, the Hungarians had, for some time, been striving to put "the Romanian nation in a political condition that made it dependent on Hungarianism."<sup>7</sup>

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1941). Kétnyelvű kiadás (Bukarest: Carocom '94 kft, 2009) / *Maghiarii în universul românesc. Maghiarii din spațiul extracarpatic românesc și presa maghiară bucureșteană (1860-1941)*. Bilingual edition (Bucharest: Carocom '94 srl, 2009); *Publicațiile periodice maghiare din București / Bukaresti magyar időszaki kiadványok*. Ziare, gazete, reviste, anuare, calendare, almanahuri, buletine, dări de seamă, îndrumătoare 1860-2010. Bibliographical description by Hilda Hencz (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2011); Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar. Scurtă istorie a maghiarilor din București de la începuturi până în prezent* (Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> These can always constitute a pretext for resuming some of the older research on the Hungarian imperial idea in central and south-eastern Europe, an issue mentioned, in the Romanian historiography, for example, by Vasile Russu; see Vasile Russu, *Transilvania în istoria modernă*, vol. I – *Revoluția românilor din Transilvania. 1848-1849* (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași, 1999); Mircea-Cristian Ghenghea, "Transilvania și Imperiul maghiar din centrul și sud-estul Europei. Motivații și justificări pentru o himeră istorică (1825-1867)", *Opțiuni istoriografice*, 8 (2006): 164-178.

<sup>6</sup> "O misiune ungurească la București", *Observatoriul*, 1, no. 66 (16/28 August 1878): 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, these issues in addition to the more or less secret actions and espionage missions conducted from Budapest, “were in the service of the Hungarian dream of ruling over Eastern Europe:”<sup>8</sup> “The Hungarians want to involve the Romanians in a conflict that would draw them away from their aspirations of emancipation of the Slavs, claiming that the Romanians are equally threatened by the Slavs, to the same extent as the Hungarians. However, in reality, it is only the Hungarians’ desire for supremacy that is truly threatened. [...]”

The Germans and Hungarians seek political supremacy and the economic exploitation of Eastern Europe. The threatened Slavs and Romanians must work together to be able to face this danger.”<sup>9</sup>

In such an increasingly troubled context, in which the Romanian-Hungarian animosities could also be seen as part of a much larger picture (the Eastern Question), the role of the journalist, assumed by Vándory Lajos, was both appropriate and possible, rather fitting for his plans in Romania. The importance of the press in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had grown exponentially, with newspapers being the main source of information for the public at large. At the same time, a journalist’s status differed greatly from that of a private individual. A journalist enjoyed a greater mobility in terms of social relations, with access to various information, public and political figures, decision-makers, etc. In other words, a very good cover for any propaganda or data-gathering operations. This was quite probably the reason why Vándory Lajos contributed to the founding of the second Hungarian-language periodical in the extra-Carpathian region, *Bukaresti Híradó*.<sup>10</sup>

Various contemporary testimonies extracted from the press of the time, archival documents, as well as several studies allow us to attempt the reconstruction, as historically accurate as possible, of both his activity in Romania, and the ideas he expressed through the periodical he coordinated.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gelu Neamțu, “Profilul spiritual, moral și fizic al unui spion maghiar la București – Vándory Lajos (1877-1885)”, *Aletheia*, 14 (2003): 413. Romanian original: “serveau visul maghiarimii în sensul că ea este chemată să domnească peste orientul Europei.”

<sup>9</sup> *O misiune ungurească*, 2. Romanian original: “Ungurii vor să angajeze pe români într-o luptă contra aspirațiunilor de emancipare ale slavilor pretextând, că românii sunt amenințați din partea slavilor în aceeași măsură ca și ungurii. În realitate însă nu este amenințat decât numai dorul de supremație al ungurilor [...]. Nemții și ungurii aspiră la supremația politică și la cexploatarea economică a orientului Europei. Slavii și românii amenințați trebuie să lucre împreună pentru ca să fie în stare să facă față acestui pericol.”

<sup>10</sup> For a general perspective on this gazette in the Hungarian historiography see, for instance, the research of Makkai Béla, “Egy kisebbségi hetilap – a București Híradó (1876-1882)”, *Magyar kisebbség. Nemzetpolitikai szemle*, 9/3(33) (2004): 257–282.

<sup>11</sup> One should mention here that, according to the information provided by the scholarly literature on the periodical *Bukaresti Híradó*, only 17 issues of the publication (dating from

With regard to most of the works consulted during our research, either in Hungarian or in Romanian, the picture that one can draw about Vándory Lajos and his activity as editor of the *Bukaresti Híradó* gazette is as serene and innocent as possible. Thus, in an article entitled “Războiul pentru independență în opinia publică progresistă maghiară a epocii” [“The War for independence in the Hungarian progressist public opinion of the time”] published in 1977 on the occasion of the centenary of the State Independence, Ștefan Csucsua presented him in terms appropriate to the period and the specific ideology. Pointing out that he sent correspondences across the Carpathians, which were published in *Erdélyi Híradó* from Târgu Mureș, the author mentioned that the person in question was the one “who founded a Hungarian-language newspaper in Bucharest and considered himself a competent and committed spokesman – of the common people.”<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in the abstract of the article, the role of the Hungarian editor in Bucharest in presenting the events fairly and accurately is highlighted: “Des journalistes, comme K. Papp Miklós, Békési Károly ou des correspondants tels que Vándori Lajos ou Veress Sándor ont publié des articles où ils ont présenté avec sympathie et de manière juste la cause de la Roumanie et apprécié positivement l’effort fourni par le peuple et surtout par l’armée roumaine pour la conquête de l’indépendance.”<sup>13</sup>

An equally fine picture can be drawn from the works of Hilda Hencz on the Hungarian press in Romania and on the Hungarian community in Bucharest. We must, however, note that the author, despite not being a historian and not delving into the latest historical writings and archival documents, has nevertheless provided undeniable contributions to our understanding of the Hungarian-language press in the extra-Carpathian area and of the situation of the Hungarians in the Romanian capital in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>14</sup>

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1880–1885) are still preserved at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, a matter that I have personally verified. However, it was shown that a large part of the collection is preserved by the National Library of Hungary “Széchényi István” in Budapest. See, in this respect, Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 70. The Hungarian version: Hencz, *Magyar Bukarest* (Magyar Napló Kiadó, 2016), 103.

<sup>12</sup> Ștefan Csucsua, “Războiul pentru independență în opinia publică progresistă maghiară a epocii”, *Studii. Revistă de istorie*, 30/4 (1977): 652.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 672.

<sup>14</sup> See Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 70: “After a long break, a new Hungarian gazette appeared between 1876–1885, namely the weekly *Gazeta de București* (*Bukuresti Híradó*), edited by the professional journalist Vándory Lajos (Lajos Beer). Only 17 issues of the collection remained [in Bucharest – our note], but the almost complete collection can be found in the Széchényi Library in Budapest. Through references to the articles published in the newspaper *Românul*, whose editor and owner was the politician C.A. Rosetti, the



As far as the Hungarian historiography itself is concerned, one should mention the works of the historian Makkai Béla;<sup>15</sup> although some of his shortcomings are common knowledge, namely his somewhat arrogant and authoritarian manner of imposing himself in the affairs of the Hungarian Association in Bucharest, Vándory Lajos is portrayed in an essentially positive light, with indisputable merits in promoting Hungarian interests south of the Carpathians.<sup>16</sup>

The overwhelming majority of Romanian perceptions and mentions of the period, along with the few analyses identified so far in our historiography are the complete opposite of the aforementioned description. Some of these approaches occasionally use labels such as “a stirrer of ethnic intolerance towards Romanians and an ordinary crook.”<sup>17</sup>

The publication of the periodical *Bukaresti Híradó* in the capital of the United Principalities had quite a wide echo within the Hungarian press of the time, with various publications, both in Hungary and Transylvania, reporting the event: *Ellenőr*<sup>18</sup>, *Fővárosi Lapok*<sup>19</sup>, *Magyarország és a nagyvilág*<sup>20</sup>, *Magyar Polgár*<sup>21</sup>, *Nemere*<sup>22</sup>, *Szegedi Híradó*,<sup>23</sup> and others. In

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tendencies of the Romanian journalists to create a monstrous image of Hungary and the Hungarians became increasingly evident. The wording used was similar to that of the *Gazeta de Transilvania*, which had been constantly hostile towards Hungarians for decades and never missed an opportunity to label them as boors.

However, the diplomatic appearances were maintained, so Vándory Lajos was among the Hungarians decorated on the occasion of the coronation of King Carol I. The decoration was handed to him by C.A. Rosetti himself, acting foreign minister at the time. Questioned by Rosetti on why he thought he had been awarded the distinction, he replied: «I think because I have honourably fulfilled my duties as a Hungarian patriot here abroad». Rosetti confirmed: «You are right! Continue your work, make your homeland known, serve its interests, because this is the duty of an honest patriot: to serve his homeland above all». A few years later, in 1885, in no. 18 of his gazette, recalling the labelling of the Hungarian people («vandal, savage, heartless, incapable of culture») and Hungary («a barbarous country») made by *Românul*, Vándory affirmed his loyalty towards Romania: «We Hungarians who live here in Romania respect Romanian laws and institutions, learn the Romanian language, enjoy Romania's joys and share its failures in the most sincere way». Moreover, the journalist continued, «I dare to say that we Hungarians love and respect Romania more than many Romanian chatterers who live at the expense of the Romanian people». For the Hungarian version, see Hencz, *Magyar Bukarest*, 103–104.

<sup>15</sup> Makkai “Egy kisebbségi hetilap”, 257–282; Makkai, *Határon túli magyar sajtó – Trianon előtt. Bukaresti és észéki magyar lapok az identitásörzés és kisebbségi érdekvédelem szolgálatában (1860–1918)* (Budapest: Médiatudományi Intézet, 2016), esp. chapter 2. *A román változattól a magyaros címformáig. A Bukaresti Híradó [Gazetta de București] (1876–1885)*, 27–50.

<sup>16</sup> Makkai, *Határon túli magyar sajtó*, 48–50.

<sup>17</sup> Neamțu, “Profilul spiritual, moral și fizic”, 414.

<sup>18</sup> *Ellenőr* [Budapest], 8, no. 276 (6 October 1876): 3.

<sup>19</sup> *Fővárosi Lapok* [Budapest], 13, no. 229 (6 October 1876): 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Magyarország és a nagyvilág* [Budapest], 13, no. 41 (8 October 1876): 650.

the very first article of the gazette, signed by Vándory Lajos, a very beautiful appeal was stated, which also seemed to represent the principle according to which this new Hungarian-language journalistic enterprise in the United Principalities was to be run:

“We have only a few words left as sons of the two countries: Let the debauchers, the wolves in sheep’s clothing, be rejected with disgust, let us not believe their words that mislead patriotic feelings, – let us love and respect each other, – let us be honest towards each other, for only mutual honesty, mutual love and respect will be a blessing for both countries.”<sup>24</sup>

Such words were pleasant to the eye and the ear, but, as later realities would show, they are utterly unsubstantiated. Not even three months after its appearance, the Hungarian gazette was already mentioned in a depreciatory manner by the editorial staff of the periodical *Telegraful* in Bucharest:

“Who reads a newspaper of a foreign trinity and does not often see phrases appealing to foreign governments to get rid of the liberal party now in power?

Who has not seen for some time a Hungarian newspaper printed in the capital of Romania under the title of *Bukuresti Hirado*, in which it is reviled to us in all tones and in the most shameless manner, inventing various infamies in order to bring upon us the hatred of the peoples of Europe and to compel them to an invasion, if not collective at least a personal Hungarian one?

Thus there are such individuals in our press; fortunately we do not believe that one can find governments that can rely on their words.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Magyar Polgár* [Kolozsvár], 10, no. 230 (7 October 1876): 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Nemere* [Seps-Szentgyörgy], 6, no. 84 (4 October 1876): 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Szegedi Híradó* [Szeged], 18, no. 124 (11 October 1876): 3.

<sup>24</sup> Vándori Lajos, “Bukarest September 30/18 1876”, *Bucuresti-Hiradó*, 1, no. 1 (1 October 1876): 1. Hungarian original: “Még csak néhány szavunk van mint két ország fiaihoz: A bujtogatókat, a bárány bőrben öltözött farkasokat undorral utasítosák el maguktól, ne higgyenek a hazafiúi érzületet mértelyező szavaiknak, – szeressük és tiszteljük egymást, – őszinték legyünk egy más irányában, mert csak is kölcsönös őszinteség, kölcsönös szeretet és tisztelet lesz áldáshozó mint két országra”.

<sup>25</sup> *Telegraful* [Bucharest], 6, no. 1416 (30 December 1876): 1. Romanian original: “Cine citește un ziar al unei trinități streine și nu vede adesea strecurându-se frase prin care se face apel la guvernele streine ca să-i scape de partidul liberal azi la putere?”

Vándory Lajos's response came promptly, as he quickly picked up the gauntlet, stating that there could be absolutely no question about what was insinuated by "a paper which in a truly shameless fashion accuses another paper of invented infamy."<sup>26</sup> At the end of his reply, Vándory pointed out that, in the future, as far as his means allowed, he would try to publish his gazette in both languages, in Hungarian and Romanian.

The attack of December 1876 was to be repeated by the editorial staff of *Telegraful* in the first days of January 1877; in an extensive article printed on the front page of the 8 January issue, an overview of the first issues of *Bukaresti Híradó* is provided, with the insertion of several translated excerpts related to the distorted presentation of the Romanian realities and the country's image.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Vándory is portrayed as a "vagabond", a wanderer who does not settle in one place for long and about whom very little is known for sure. Nevertheless, *Telegraful* had obtained information that his real name was, in fact, not Vándory:

"According to the most reliable information we have, we are hereby able to denounce, on our own responsibility, that this individual usurps in the midst of our society a fictitious name, the name Vandory, which, in Romanian, merely means: *traveller*. The name under which he first appeared in Bucharest and under which he has lived here for several months is a Jewish name: **Behr**. Under this name, in the library of the Hungarian society here there are still several books donated by him, with this signature of his own hand."<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, as the newspaper concluded, for his dubious activities, he had to become a concern for the authorities.

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Cine nu a văzut de câțva timp o foaie ungurească, tipărită în capitala României, sub titlu<|> *Bukuresti Hirado*, în care suntem înjurați pe toate tonurile și în modul cel mai nerușinat, inventând diferite infamii spre a ne atrage ura popoarelor din Europa și a le sili la o invasiune dacă nu colectivă cel puțin personal ungurească?

Sunt dar asemenea indivizi la noi în presă; din norocire însă nu credem să se găsească guverne cari să pue temei pe zisele lor."

<sup>26</sup> *Telegraful*, 7, no. 1422 (8 January 1877): 1.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Romanian original: "După informațiunile cele mai positive ce avem, suntem în stare a denunța, pe răspunderea noastră chiar, că acest individ usurpă în mijlocul societății noastre un nume fictiv, numele *Vandory*, care pe românește nu va să zică nimic alta decât: *călător*. Numele supt care s-a presintat pentru prima oară în București, și supt care a trăit aici câteva luni de zile, este un nume jidovesc: **Behr**. Sub acest nume se găsesc și astăzi în biblioteca societății maghiare de aici câteva cărți, donate de dânsul, cu această iscălitură a propriei sale mâini."

According to the Hungarian historian Béla Makkai, the negative attitude towards the periodical *Bukaresti Híradó* was linked, to a certain extent, to the broader picture of the Eastern Question in 1876–1878, when the sympathies of a large part of the Hungarian public opinion were mainly directed to the Ottoman Empire,<sup>29</sup> an aspect to which one must add the sudden revival of the problem of spies who were moving freely throughout the country.

The issue of espionage on the territory of the United Principalities in the period immediately prior to the proclamation of the State Independence had reached worrying proportions for some of the decision-makers in Bucharest, to the point that, on 9 May 1877, Nicolae Flevea made an interpellation on this matter in the Chamber of Deputies addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mihail Kogălniceanu. Taking advantage of this fact and of the Minister's reply, who "solemnly promised that he would take appropriate measures against the spies who roam the country from one corner to the other,"<sup>30</sup> the journalists from *Telegraful* reiterated the accusations against Vándory Lajos and his gazette, *Bukaresti Híradó*, stating:

"Well, we do not know a spy who is more of a spy than this one! – We have just learned that for two days now he has been wandering around our camp in little Romania, no doubt with the aim of making us read again, in a few days, in *Hon*, *Kelet*, *Pester Lloyd* and other Hungarian newspapers his infamous and revolting slanders, profusely thrown at our army."<sup>31</sup>

Things would become even more complicated for Vándory Lajos in June 1877. Initially, because of the correspondences he had sent to various newspapers in Hungary and Austria, such as *A Hon*, *Pesti Napló*, and *Neue Freie Presse*, in which he gave voice to an obvious anti-Russian attitude, he was targeted by the Russian police; they warned him that he was to either cease these activities or he would be rendered inoffensive.<sup>32</sup> As the Russians issued a warrant for his arrest on 6 June, he fled

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<sup>29</sup> Makkai, *Határon túli magyar sajtó*, 29–30.

<sup>30</sup> "București, 24 Mai", *Telegraful*, 7, no. 1535 (25 May 1877): 2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Romanian original: "Ei bine, mai spion decât acesta noi nu cunoaștem! – Chiar acum aflăm că ar fi cutreerând de două zile deja tabăra noastră din România mică, negreșit cu scopul de a face să citim iarăși, preste câteva zile, în *Hon*, *Kelet*, *Pester Lloyd* și alte ziare ungurești calomniile sale infame și revoltătoare, aruncate cu profuziune asupra armatei noastre."

<sup>32</sup> Makkai, *Határon túli magyar sajtó*, 30–31.

Bucharest with the help of a Romanian officer and took refuge in Ruschuk in the Ottoman Empire. Later, in the same month of June 1877, the periodical *Gazeta Transilvaniei* in Braşov published the information that *Bukaresti Híradó* was receiving funds from the government in Budapest and that the editor,

“a Jew named Behr or Vándory had promised to work in the interest of the good understanding between Romanians and Hungarians; but he thought he could achieve this purpose by insulting and swearing at the Romanian government and Romanians in general, and claiming that the Hungarians in Romania – if one could talk about Hungarians in Romania – are treated worse than the Jews, whose life and fortune are precarious and subject to change from one day to another. After the outbreak of the war, the editor of this journal fled to Ruschuk, from where he then began to write the most infamous correspondences about Romania in the Hungarian newspapers in Cluj.”<sup>33</sup>

This situation also directly affected the Hungarian community in the Romanian capital which, through its representatives, in order to distance itself from the allegations expressed on different occasions by Vándory Lajos, did not hesitate to issue a letter in which it refuted “the calumnies of the Hungarian newspapers” and dissociated itself from the untruths “written by that individual *Behr* or *Vandori*,” who had described the establishment of the *Bukaresti Híradó* gazette in a certain manner.<sup>34</sup>

Given the increasingly tense circumstances, it is not surprising that for several months in 1877 and 1878 the periodical coordinated by Vándory Lajos ceased its publication. Apparently, it was not until January 1879 that it resumed publication, and in April of the same year,<sup>35</sup> in the context of some severe floods in Hungary, *Bukaresti Híradó*

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<sup>33</sup> *Gazeta Transilvaniei* [Braşov], 40, no. 45 (12/24 June 1877): 3. Romanian original: “un jidan Behr sau Vándory promisese a lucra în interesul bunei înțelegeri între români și maghiari; însă dânsul crezu a ajunge la acest scop prin insulte și înjurături contra guvernului român și a românilor în genere, și susținând, că ungurii din România – dacă poate fi vorba de unguri în România – sunt mai rău tratați decât jidanii, a căror viață și avere nu este sigură de pe o zi pe alta. După erumperea resbelului redactorele acestui jurnal a fugit la Rusciuc, de unde apoi începu a scrie în jurnalele maghiare din Cluj cele mai infame corespondințe despre România.”

<sup>34</sup> See for instance *Telegraful*, 7, no. 1540 (1 June 1877): 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Publicațiile periodice românești (ziare, reviste, gazete)*. Bibliographical description by Nerva Hodoș and Al. Sadi Ionescu. With an introduction by Ion Bianu. Tome I – *Catalog alfabetic 1820-1906* (Bucharest – Leipzig – Vienna, 1913), 86.

published an article which was reprinted in a number of newspapers in Romania. In that article, Vándory was urging that the recent frictions and Hungarian interdictions during the War of Independence (1877-1878),<sup>36</sup> which, according to his explanations, were to be understood only in the context of Hungary's antipathy towards Russia, should be forgotten.<sup>37</sup>

As various contemporary testimonies show, in addition to the information present in the archival documents known so far about Vándory Lajos (such as those in the Fund of the Royal Hungarian Ministry of Internal Affairs, kept at the Cluj County Service of the National Archives of Romania),<sup>38</sup> his activity on the territory of the Romanian state became more intense and productive in the first part of

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<sup>36</sup> The conflict between Russia and Turkey in 1877-1878 is generally known in Romania as The War of Independence (sometimes presented as The Russo-Romanian-Turkish War – Războiul ruso-româno-turc), as the Romanian state gained its national independence following the participation at this conflict, a reality which was recognized in 1878 at San Stefano and Berlin.

<sup>37</sup> "O voce maghiară", *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, 42, no. 25 (29 March / 10 April 1879): 3: "Under this title, the Romanian newspapers in Romania published an article of the Hungarian paper «Bukaresti Hiradó» which we also reproduce, since we are convinced that our readers will know how to appreciate it, like many of our brothers from over there:

«The Prince of Romania sent two thousand francs to Count Hoyos, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, for the floods in Seghedin. This is the manifestation of a sentiment so noble that any comments become superfluous. The Romanian nation does not wait to be asked, urged only by the impulse of its own soul it comes and participates with generosity to the subscriptions. Nevertheless, the Romanian press all over the country and regardless of political orientation makes the warmest appeals to public generosity. It invites the Romanian nation to throw off the veil of oblivion over the interdiction of the Hungarian government in Sibiu (regarding the subscriptions for the Romanian wounded). Hungary has endured a terrible misfortune, and so it must be helped; this is the motto of the Romanian papers. However, we shall also say, let us throw away the veil of forgetfulness over the past and leave the criticism of that fact to history. Where the soul must work, let the political struggles cease. [...]

May Romania never need the generosity of others; may disaster never befall this beautiful country; – but should peril or misfortune ever strike it, may Romania be sure to find generous brothers in the sons of Hungary, in the Hungarian nation. For this nation is not ungrateful, it never forgets a good deed it has received. It proved this during the Russo-Turkish war when, in the face of the entire Europe, the Hungarian nation so warmly, one might say fanatically, protected the wretched sick man.

Only in this and in the Hungarian antipathy for the northern colossus should the Romanian nation seek to explain the exceptional attitude of the Hungarian nation towards the Romanian wounded two years ago, and not to attribute it to an antipathy for itself. Hungary will never forget the generosity of the Romanian Prince; Hungary will never forget the generosity of the Romanian nation; Hungary will pay respect to the Romanian press for its noble zeal»."

<sup>38</sup> See *Documente privind mișcarea națională a românilor din Transilvania*. Vol. I – 1881-1891. Introductory study by Șerban Polverejan (Bucharest: Editura Viitorul Românesc, 1997), *passim*.

the 1880s.<sup>39</sup> A clear proof in this regard is brought by the more detailed data contained in these documents, many of which are, in fact, reports addressed by the editor of the Hungarian gazette in Bucharest to his superiors in Hungary. According to their contents, one may conclude that one of his main tasks was to gather information and monitor the so-called “Daco-Romanianists” – the persons from the Romanian Kingdom<sup>40</sup> or from Transylvania who supported the annexation of Transylvania and the Banat to Romania.<sup>41</sup>

In our opinion, this aspect should be connected not only to the more intensive activity of the Romanian society in the Old Kingdom and the establishment of structures explicitly targeting the matter of the Romanians in Transylvania (such as, for instance, the irredentist society “Carpații” / “The Carpathians”, founded in 1882), but also with the general situation in the Hungarian state, where systematic Magyarization measures were implemented. In this context, we must also mention the famous Central Society for the Magyarization of Names (Központi Névmagyarosító Társaság), created in 1881 in Budapest, headed by a figure too well-known to some of the Romanians in Transylvania, Telkes Simon, who, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (more precisely, in 1897), one year after the celebration of the “Hungarian Millennium”, would write and publish an eloquent brochure for the Magyarization efforts, entitled *How do we Magyarize the surnames?* (*Hogy magyarosítsuk a vezetéknéveket?*). Moreover, in 1885, the Hungarian Cultural Association in Transylvania (Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület – EMKE) was founded with the direct support of the Hungarian authorities, with the clear aim of assisting the Magyarization process and counteracting the actions of The Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (Asociațiunea Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român – ASTRA).

Given all of these aspects, in addition to the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania in 1881, as well as the firm attitude of the rulers in Bucharest regarding the Question of the Danube, to the displeasure of the Dual Monarchy,<sup>42</sup> one can better understand the density of the reports and information sent by the Austro-Hungarian agents during that period.

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<sup>39</sup> Neamțu, “Profilul spiritual, moral și fizic,” 414.

<sup>40</sup> Romania became a kingdom on 14/26 March 1881.

<sup>41</sup> Neamțu, “Profilul spiritual, moral și fizic,” 413.

<sup>42</sup> Gheorghe Nicolae Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *România și Tripla Alianță 1878-1914* (Bucharest: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979), *passim*. More recently, with extensive explanations, Gheorghe Cliveti, *România modernă și “apogeul Europei” 1815-1914* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2018), especially 674–1059.

Not without reason, in the summer of 1880, the journals *Gazeta Transilvaniei* and *România liberă* drew attention to the more than suspicious activities of Vándory Lajos, portrayed by the editors of the latter periodical as

“a Hungarian missionary who, subsidized by the government in Budapest, has, for several years, sought to spread ideas on the territory of Romania, ideas that have nothing to do with the interests or dignity of our state. So far, these attempts of Hungarian propaganda have been overlooked; the government may have told itself that it wants to be tolerant. But this is not tolerance, it is negligence, and, depending on the circumstances, negligence can become purely criminal.”<sup>43</sup>

In that year, Vándory Lajos, despite being a Calvinist,<sup>44</sup> was elected chairman of a permanent committee of the Catholic community in Bucharest, and his first action was to petition the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, Count von Hoyos-Sprinzenstein, and the Roman Catholic Bishop, asking for support for the Hungarian-language education and for the strengthening of the Hungarian Catholic and Reformed Church in Romania.<sup>45</sup>

An interesting episode took place the next year, 1881, in the period following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania. Thus, on 15/27 August 1881, the readers of the *Monitorul Oficial al României* could learn that, in accordance with the High Royal Decree no. 1927 of 4 August of the same year, King Carol I conferred the Order of the “Crown of Romania” (“Coroana României”), in various grades, to the

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<sup>43</sup> “Cultul iubirei către ‘patria maghiară’,” *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, 43, no. 53 (3/15 July 1880): 2–3; “Propaganda ungurească în România,” *România liberă* [Bucharest], 4, no. 928 (6 July 1880): 3 – it reproduces the article in *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, preceded by a comment of the editorial staff. Romanian original: “un misionar maghiar, care subvenționat de guvernul de la Budapesta, caută să propage de mai mulți ani pe teritoriul României idei, cari de fel nu se unesc nici cu interesele nici cu demnitatea statului nostru. Până acum s-au trecut cu vederea aceste încercări de propagandă maghiară; guvernul își va fi zis poate, că vrea să fie tolerant. Dar aceasta nu este toleranță, este neglijență, și neglijența poate deveni după împrejurări curată crimă.”

<sup>44</sup> See what seems to be his funeral notice, a document accessible online at <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6QG7-H7X?i=189&wc=M6WK-RP8%3A101520701%2C104654001&cc=1542666> (accessed on 28 October 2023). The document also shows that he died in Török-Becsé at the age of 63, on 19 November 1897 and contains other several details regarding his family. I am grateful to the reviewers who brought this funeral notice to my attention.

<sup>45</sup> “Cultul iubirei către ‘patria maghiară’,” 3.



representatives of different foreign communities in the country who, on the occasion of the coronation festivities, had been delegated to express the devotion and gratitude of those communities. Among these representatives was, together with Veress Sándor, “Mr. Ludovic Vandory, head of the Hungarian society’s cortege,” who was the recipient of the “Crown of Romania” order with the rank of officer.<sup>46</sup> Although seemingly innocent, this episode raises some questions with regard to the relations in the high circles of Romanian politics which he managed to establish. By searching the available sources, one can identify a few names and implicitly some connections which, most probably, Vándory Lajos knew how to cultivate during his years in Romania. First of all, in an article from June 1884, which appeared in *România liberă*, the interesting idea that the *Bukaresti Híradó* gazette would have benefited from subsidies provided by the Romanian state was formulated, and Vasile Boierescu was the one incriminated:

“[...] the Hungarian pamphlet in the capital was subsidized by the Romanian government when the late Boierescu was a member for the last time. We do not know if the subsidy is still given to it today, there is no reason to believe it is not. The sheet had ceased after Mr. Boierescu’s departure from the ministry; but for some time now it has been appearing again, endorsing the government as before and reviling what is Romanian.”<sup>47</sup>

He was also one of the acquaintances of C.A. Rosetti who, incidentally, presented him with the Order of the “Crown of Romania” in

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<sup>46</sup> *Monitorul Oficial al României*, no. 109 (15/27 August 1881): 3359–3360: “**Rectification.** – In the Royal Decree No. 1.927, published in *Monitorul Oficial* No. 100 of 4 August this year, due to a manuscript error, it was omitted:

Mr. Ludovic Vandory, head of the cortege of the Hungarian society, with the rank of officer of the Order of the Crown of Romania, and Mr. Moritz Blank, banker, with the class of knight of the same order.” Romanian original: “**Rectificare.** – În înaltul decret regal, No. 1.927, publicat în *Monitorul oficial* No. 100, din 4 August a.c., din eroare de manuscris, s-a omis a se trece:

D. Ludovic Vandory, șeful cortegiului societății maghiare, cu gradul de ofițer al ordinului Coroana României, și D. Moritz Blank, bancher, cu gradul de cavalier, al aceluiași ordin.”

<sup>47</sup> “Ceea ce se poate întâmpla la noi,” *România liberă*, 8, no. 2083 (16 June 1884): 3. Romanian original: “[...] pamfletul unguresc din capitală a fost subvenționat de guvernul român pe când se găsea într-însul, pentru ultima oară, reposatul Boierescu. Nu știm dacă subvențiunea nu i se dă și astăzi, nimic nu ne legitimează a crede că nu. Foaia încetase după eșirea din minister a d-lui Vasile Boierescu; de câțva timp apare însă din nou, cădelnițând guvernul, ca și mai înainte și hulind ceea ce este românesc.”

the name of King Carol I.<sup>48</sup> Other names which had been in contact with Vándory Lajos in various contexts are V.A. Urechia and Gheorghe Chițu, in their capacity as Minister of Public Instruction, respectively Minister of Justice.<sup>49</sup> Last but not least, most probably as a result of these connections, but also of the status he was able to gain within the Hungarian society in Bucharest, in the same month of August 1881, he went to Sinaia, where Count Andrassy, former imperial foreign minister of the Dual Monarchy paid a private visit to King Carol I. According to contemporary accounts, following an hour-long discussion with C.A. Rosetti, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Andrassy received the Hungarian gazetteers Vándory and Berengi:

“He told them that he had come to Sinaia as a private individual, particularly in response to the King's invitation. The Count dismissed the reports of Romanian agitation in Hungary as falsehoods. The interest of the Romanians and Hungarians is to fight together against the Slavic influence; from this viewpoint both countries are natural allies.”<sup>50</sup>

Having had access to an article from 2003 written by the late researcher Gelu Neamțu from Cluj (practically one of the two most thorough studies we have identified so far in the Romanian historiography on the subject under scrutiny in the present paper), we can even outline a physical and moral profile of this interesting figure. Analysing a number of documents from the archives in Cluj, Gelu Neamțu identified the passport that Vándory Lajos used at a certain time on the Romanian territory. His features are those of a person with an ordinary physiognomy, who did not stand out in any particular way: “Height: medium. Face: round. Hair: brown. Eyes: brown. Mouth: ordinary. Nose: normal. Distinguishing marks: -.”<sup>51</sup>

As for the moral profile of Vándory Lajos, the researcher from Cluj showed that this is especially evident from his personal business,

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<sup>48</sup> Hencz, *Magyarok román világban / Maghiarii în universul românesc*, 25; Hencz, *Bucureștiul maghiar*, 70.

<sup>49</sup> “Sibiu 28 Iunie,” *Telegraful Român* [Sibiu], 30, no. 74 (29 June / 11 July 1882): 1.

<sup>50</sup> *România liberă*, 5, no. 1257 (22 August 1881): 1. Romanian original: “Acestora le-a comunicat, că el a venit la Sinaia ca persoană privată și special numai la invitarea regelui. Conte a calificat ca mincinoase știrile despre o agitațiune a României în Ungaria. Interesul Românilor și al Ungurilor este a lupta în comun contra curentului slav; din punctul de vedere al acestei tendințe ambele țări sunt nește aliate naturale.”

<sup>51</sup> Neamțu, “Profilul spiritual, moral și fizic,” 418 – Annex I.

“which was nothing but a pitiful, yet very profitable swindle (the spy was «clever»): he identified Romanian emigrants from Transylvania who had kept their citizenship and therefore were required, according to the laws in force in Austria-Hungary, to return home, in order to complete their military duty. After identifying the boys in question, he assured them that he could exempt them from the army, taking from them, in exchange, large and hard-earned amounts of money, but without doing anything about the exemption from the army. This extortion was practiced on a scale large enough to reach the ears of the embassy, which opened an investigation, eventually finding him guilty.”<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, in 1885, the Hungarian Society in Bucharest (Bukarest Magyar Társulat) and the curator of the Evangelical-Reformed parish in the capital submitted a complaint to the Austro-Hungarian authorities, in which he was called a swindler and accused of “stirring up misunderstandings and agitating nationalities by various means against each other.”<sup>53</sup>

From our point of view, in addition to the picture that the researcher in Cluj outlined for him, we cannot ignore the fact that Vándory Lajos was as suited as possible for his mission, proving self-control and the ability to react quickly even in conflict situations. The best example in this sense can be found in the pages of the newspaper *România liberă* which, in its issue of 4 May 1885 published the following news report:

“Last night, between 10 and 11 o’clock, Mr. Vandory Lajos, the director of «Bukaresti Hirado», was attacked by a thug in the pass under the Metropolitan’s hill. Asked in a threatening manner by the thug to give him 20 lei, Mr. Vandory quickly responded with two slaps which confused the assailant and gave him time to call the police. The thug is arrested.”<sup>54</sup>

At the end of 1885, Vándory Lajos left Romania for Serbia, another area from which Budapest’s interests needed the most reliable and relevant information. With his departure, the existence of the second

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 416 and 423 – Annex VI.

<sup>54</sup> *România liberă*, 9, no. 2337 (4 May 1885): 4.

Hungarian-language gazette in the Romanian extra-Carpathian space was officially ended, the last issue of *Bukaresti Híradó* appearing on 3 October 1885. Although known fairly little within the Romanian historiography, both the person and the activity of the editor-in-chief Vándory Lajos and the gazette he edited in Bucharest certainly deserve a broader and more in-depth analysis, without neglecting the fact that the existing sources in Hungarian are richer in information and at least some of them are somewhat easier to access now, thanks to the progresses made by the digitization technology in recent years.

# The Interest of the Convert: Marius Theodorian-Carada and the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in the First Decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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**Abstract:** The present study aims to present the situation of the Greek-Catholic community in Bucharest in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, starting from the reports that Marius Theodorian-Carada sent to the Holy See at that time. As a convert to Greek Catholicism in 1908, Theodorian-Carada showed an increased interest in the situation of the Greek Catholic believers in Bucharest during the interwar period, more precisely after the parish of Saint Basil the Great had been placed under the authority of the Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Blaj. The present paper covers the intellectual profile of the convert, his continuous activism for the cause of the union of the Orthodox Church in Romania with the Catholic Church and, above all, the solutions that Theodorian-Carada proposed in response to the most urgent problems that the Romanian Greek Catholic Church was facing at that time. Last but not least, our study sheds light, based on archival documents, on the perspective that the Nunciature from Bucharest and the Greek-Catholic hierarchy had on the issues raised.

**Keywords:** Greek-Catholic Parish of Saint Basil in Bucharest, union of Churches, liturgical language, religious press, Greek-Catholics in the Old Romanian Kingdom

**Rezumat:** Studiul de față are în vedere prezentarea situației comunității greco-catolice din București în primele decenii ale secolului al XX-lea pornind de la rapoartele pe care Marius Theodorian-Carada le-a trimis în acele vremuri Sfântului Scaun. În calitate de convertit la greco-catolicism în 1908, Theodorian-Carada a manifestat un interes sporit față de situația credincioșilor greco-

catolici din București în perioada interbelică, mai exact după ce parohia Sfântul Vasile cel Mare de acolo a fost pusă sub autoritatea arhiecezei greco-catolice de Blaj. S-a avut în vedere profilul intelectual al convertitului, activismul său susținut pentru cauza unirii Bisericii ortodoxe din România cu Biserica catolică și, mai ales, soluțiile pe care Theodorian-Carada le-a formulat la cele mai stringente probleme cu care se confrunta în acele timpuri Biserica greco-catolică românească. Nu în ultimul rând, studiul nostru pune în lumină, pe baza documentelor de arhivă, perspectiva pe care Nunțiatul de la București și ierarhia greco-catolică au avut-o asupra problemelor reclamate.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Parohia greco-catolică Sfântul Vasile din București, unirea Bisericilor, limba liturgică, presă religioasă, greco-catolici în Vechiul Regat român

1909 was the year that symbolically marked the presence of other Romanians in the capital of the Romanian Kingdom, namely the Greek-Catholic Romanians. Although their existence in Bucharest and in other places of Romania at that time was not something particularly new, the older plans related to the construction of a place of worship for them materialized only at the end of the first decade of the last century. However, the lack of united churches did not mean the total absence of the spiritual assistance needed by the increasingly numerous Greek-Catholic Romanians beyond the mountains.<sup>1</sup> As their numbers increased, the Transylvanian hierarchy dispatched priests to attend to the spiritual needs of these faithful emigrants. The units in the capital city have had their own shepherd of souls since 1817, when their number was estimated to be no more than 1000.<sup>2</sup> Until 1886, the community did not have a stable priest, but from that year onward, an uninterrupted series of priests who appear to have sequentially attended to the spiritual needs of the religious group in question.

However, the presence of priests in the extra-Carpathian communities was not the only focus of the leadership of the United Church in Transylvania. It made efforts to acquire land in order to build them proper places of worship. In the city, on the banks of the Dâmbovița

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<sup>1</sup> Octavian Bârlea, "Biserica română unită între cele două războaie mondiale" [The Romanian Church united between the two world wars], in *Biserica Română Unită - două sute cincizeci de ani de istorie* [The United Romanian Church - two hundred and fifty years of history] (Cluj-Napoca: Casa de editură "Viața creștină", 1998), 91.

<sup>2</sup> Archivio della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali [Archive of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches] (hereinafter A.C.C.O.), *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 52.

River, one such a property was purchased at the time when Demetriu Radu was in charge of shepherding the Greek-Catholic believers in Bucharest. Despite having access to the highest political decision-making circles of the time (King Carol I, Prime Minister Ion C. Brătianu, etc.), the priest originally from Tâmpăhaza failed to carry out the construction plan for a Greek-Catholic place of worship for the community.<sup>3</sup> The one who will succeed in this endeavour was Archbishop Raymund Netzhammer, although his predecessor at the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Romania also showed interest in the aforementioned project.<sup>4</sup> He submitted the necessary documentation in order to obtain the construction authorization from the City Hall of the capital (headed at that time by Vintilă Brătianu). Moreover, he personally dealt with the employment of the architect (Nicolae Ghika-Budești). He provided financial support and often inspected the construction works, the decoration and the appropriate equipment of the church. Thus, the high hierarch turned out to be, in fact, a vehement opponent of the idea that the Greek-Catholic Romanians had to attend Orthodox places of worship outside of Transylvania, an idea that had, at that time, been rather widespread. The consecration of the new religious establishment by the same Swiss prelate, on the day of the commemoration of Saint Nicholas in 1909, marked the drawing of a symbolic border intended to contribute to the preservation of the Greek-Catholic confessional identity in an Orthodox-dominated space. Moreover, the founder of the elegant church in the Polonă Street did not stop there. In 1913, Raymund Netzhammer managed to purchase a plot of land on Aquila/Sirenelor Street,<sup>5</sup> on which he intended to build the second sacred place, a project that was postponed by the start of the First World War.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ciprian Robotin, *O viață în slujba Bisericii și a națiunii: episcopul Demetriu Radu* [A life in the service of the Church and the nation: Bishop Demetriu Radu] (Timișoara: Artpress, 2020), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Raymund Netzhammer, *Episcop în România. Într-o epocă a conflictelor naționale și religioase* [Bishop in Romania. In an era of national and religious conflicts], vol. I, edited by Nikolaus Netzhammer and Krista Zach (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 81-82.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 453. The land had been purchased on 30 June 1913, for the sum of 41,000 francs and covered an area of approximately 1,900 m<sup>2</sup>. "We bought that place for a second united Romanian church [...] The position is excellent, given that the land is located on the plateau and, because of this, it is also vigorous", notes Netzhammer.

<sup>6</sup> It seems that this was not the only reason for postponing the construction of the second place of worship for the Greek-Catholic believers in the capital. From a letter written by Archbishop Alexandru Cisar and addressed to Cardinal Giovanni Tacci, we find out that the main reason for his predecessor's rejection of the idea of building the second united church in Bucharest was the poor participation of the faithful there in the liturgical offices.

After the union of Transylvania with the Old Kingdom, the hierarchy of the Greek-Catholic Church was even more interested in overcoming the image of a regional Church. The task was not easy, considering that, for over two hundred years, the organizational nucleus of the United Church had been in the Transylvanian province, the place where its institutional ramifications also emerged and developed over time. Therefore, this was, in fact, a test with multiple stakes. It implied an expansion beyond the consecrated territory. Thus, the challenge resided in the institutional flexibility of the United Church, its ability to take root in the extra-Carpathian area and its ability to adapt to a context that was politically, culturally and confession-wise very different, compared to the previous period.<sup>7</sup> However, the expansion strategies of the Greek-Catholic Church were hindered by the Orthodox Church's claims of confessional supremacy over the Romanians from the extra-Carpathian area. In Transylvania, the competition between the two Romanian confessions intensified after the war, as evidenced by the attempts of the Orthodox hierarchy (some of them successful) to penetrate predominantly Greek-Catholic "fronts", such as the central and northern part of the Transylvanian province.<sup>8</sup>

As a first step, an administrative measure was required. This pertained to the necessity of transferring the unions from the capital city under the spiritual authority of the Roman Catholic Church to that of the united hierarchy.. Initiated shortly after the union of Transylvania with Romania, the action was justified by the need to secure greater involvement from the state, commensurate with the needs of the respective community. After the war, there was also the intention (one that was implied, rather than explicit) of the Greek-Catholic hierarchy to distance itself from the choir of Latin rite bishops, an association that it considered to be harmful to its image. Once the agreement of Archbishop Netzhhammer was obtained (with whom the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan

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As such, the Roman Catholic hierarchy considered changing the destination of the purchased land and the amount collected for the construction of a Latin rite church or a diocesan hospital: A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, III, 1-17, doc. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Hitchins, "Orthodoxism: Polemics over Ethnicity and Religion in Interwar Romania," in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, edited by Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995), 135-136.

<sup>8</sup> Lucian Turcu, "Ortodoxie majoritară - greco-catolicism provincial. Despre biconfesionalismul românilor ardeleni în primul deceniu interbelic" [Majority Orthodoxy - provincial Greek Catholicism. About the biconfesionalism of Transylvanian Romanians in the first interwar decade], in *Caiete de antropologie istorică* [Notebooks of historical anthropology], year X, no. 1 (18) (2011): 107-110.



at that time, Vasile Suciu, had discussed the subject twice, during the spring of 1920, managing to agree on the conditions for the transfer of authority, on a provisional basis, over the parish of Saint Vasile) to shepherd the Greek-Catholics from Bucharest, the united hierarchy's aspirations grew even further. Shortly afterwards, it expressed the desire to bring all Greek-Catholic believers scattered across the territory of ancient Romania under its authority. This project is based not only on the idea of providing the necessary spiritual assistance to geographically scattered communities, by connecting parishes and making priests available to them for administering the sacraments, but also on the ideal of expanding the Greek-Catholic confession among the Romanians of the Old Kingdom. If the latter desire turned out to be an unrealistic, the initial phase of the first objective was achieved at the beginning of 1924, and received the final approval with the Concordat of 1927.<sup>9</sup>

If the objective of placing the believers dispersed throughout the territory of the Old Kingdom and Bessarabia under the management of the Metropolitan of Blaj was achieved without much difficulty, the same cannot be said about the process of organizing those communities into parishes or about the construction of places of worship or the building of parish houses. It took time, resources and perseverance for the good intentions of the united hierarchy to take shape. At the beginning of the fourth decade of the last century, the unions established outside Transylvania were barely organized in 10 parishes.<sup>10</sup> At that time, not all benefited from legal recognition and material support from the state authorities. The only community that had a place of worship suitable for sacred functions continued to be the one in Bucharest. But even there, the small church built a quarter of a century prior was completely inadequate for the growing number of Greek Catholic believers settled in the country's capital city. After Bucharest, the largest Greek-Catholic community was in Ploiești, a city that, at that time, had approximately 70,000 inhabitants. The Greek-Catholic parish in that locality was a recent one, having been established in 1931, the number of believers affiliated to it being estimated at 2000. Only two years after its foundation, the parish received a priest, who, incidentally, was compelled to officiate the sacred functions in improvised spaces, as there was no proper church available.

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<sup>9</sup> *România-Vatican. Relații diplomatice, vol. I, 1920-1950* [Romania-Vatican. Diplomatic relations, vol. I, 1920-1950], authors: Ioan-Marius Bucur, Cristina Păiușan, Ioan Popescu, Dumitru Preda; contributors: Alexandru Ghișa, Costin Ionescu, Nicolae-Alexandru Nicolescu (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2003), 33.

<sup>10</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 52.

Other cities where the Greek-Catholic presence was notable, but the communities were still not organized into parishes, were Constanta, Brăila and Galați. In each of these settlements, efforts were made to rent or buy locations that were then meant to function as chapels, or to obtain (by donation or by purchase) some land intended for the construction of places of worship. Other cities targeted by the attempts to organize Greek-Catholic groups from beyond the Carpathians were Craiova, Câmpina, Focșani, Iasi.

The expansion of the Greek-Catholic Church beyond its natural borders was not done exclusively by the movement of the Transylvanian population towards and east of the Carpathians. In several instances, it was actually due to voluntary conversions from Orthodoxy to Greek Catholicism. Without carrying out an actual proselytizing action, the United Church had a series of adhesions to the faith it professed. Before the war, such cases had been rather isolated. However, after the creation of Greater Romania, the hope that as many Romanians as possible would embrace this confession within the leadership of the Greek-Catholic Church, as previously mentioned. The ambitious expectation was not solely fueled by the Latin branch of the ethnic ancestry of the Romanians. It was also ignited by the considerable prestige that the Catholic Church possessed (both organizationally, and in terms of the instruments for the propagation of the teachings of the faith and social involvement). This prestige was known even within the Orthodox world.<sup>11</sup> But these ideals and theoretical projections were shattered by the initiatives and practical measures taken by the authorities, shortly after the war, at the expense of the Orthodox Church. Given its numerical superiority and, above all, the privileged treatment it received from the state, post-war Orthodoxy consolidated its status, taking advantage of an ideology that equated national identity and the religious (Orthodox) identity of Romanians.<sup>12</sup> The same conception that asserts the unity of destiny between the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church perceives the existence of the second Romanian Church, the Greek-Catholic one, as a threat and even a weakness for the Romanian community. Despite the fact that its merits had initially been acknowledged, with respect to the roles it had played in the cultural and social history of the Romanians, which led to the

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<sup>11</sup> George Enache, *Ortodoxie și putere în România contemporană. Studii și eseuri* [Orthodoxy and power in contemporary Romania. Studies and essays] (Bucharest: Editura Nemira, 2005), 459.

<sup>12</sup> Olivier Gillet, "Orthodoxie, nation et ethnicité en Roumanie au XXe siècle: un problème ecclésiologique et politique," in *Ethnicity and Religion in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Maria Crăciun, Ovidiu Ghitta (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 1995), 348.

fulfilment of the national unity ideal, its purpose was considered finished.<sup>13</sup> Threatened by the virulence of such force-discourse, which often led to concrete unfriendly political actions taken towards it,<sup>14</sup> the Greek-Catholic Church attempted to preserve its spiritual and human heritage, understanding that its future largely depended on the loud voices of those who could build a wall of defence around it. One of these voices was undoubtedly that of Marius Theodorian-Carada.

Born 155 years ago in Craiova, Marius Theodorian-Carada is part of the gallery of intellectuals deeply involved in the life of the Church in the years before the First World War and in those that followed. Of the two halves of his name, the second obviously had the greatest resonance for the efforts to modernize the Romanian society from a political, economic and cultural perspective. It links him to his illustrious ancestor,<sup>15</sup> Eugeniu Carada, to whom he dedicated an opus, acknowledging the facts and honouring the merits.<sup>16</sup> A lawyer by training, Marius Theodorian-Carada, like other intellectuals, became involved in the Romanian political life, promoting the values upheld, not only from the rostrum of the Parliament, but also through press articles, as a tireless contributor to the most important periodicals of the time.<sup>17</sup> As a prolific author, he was strongly involved in the debates around the political and cultural ideas of the time, repeatedly proving his qualities as a talented polemicist.<sup>18</sup> Theodorian-Carada was also a careful observer

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<sup>13</sup> Nicolae Gudea, "Reflecții privind relația Stat-Biserică - o abordare teologică greco-catolică" [Reflections on the State-Church relationship - a Greek-Catholic theological approach], in Babeș-Bolyai University / Pazmany Peter Catholic University, *Theological Doctrines on the Ideal Church-State Relation / Relația ideală dintre Biserică și stat* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2000), 54.

<sup>14</sup> Lucian Turcu, *Între idealuri și realitate. Arhiepiscopia greco-catolică de Alba Iulia și Făgăraș în timpul păstoririi mitropolitului Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)* [Between ideals and reality. The Greek-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș during the pastorate of Metropolitan Vasile Suciu (1920-1935)] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Mega, 2017), 60-230.

<sup>15</sup> Dinică Ciobotea, Aurelia Florescu, "Contribuții genealogice la o biografie a lui Eugeniu Carada" [Genealogical contributions to a biography of Eugeniu Carada], *Analele Universității din Craiova, Seria Istorie*, year XVI, No. 1(19) (2011): 119-122.

<sup>16</sup> Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Eugeniu Carada* (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1922).

<sup>17</sup> Id., *Efimeridele. Însemnări și amintiri, 1908-1928* [Notes and memories, 1908-1928] (Săbăoani: Tipografia „Serafica”, 1937), 124-125; Dinu Bălan, „A piece of Mariu(s) Theodorian Carada’s journalism. His collaboration with *Decalogue* magazine”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie „A. D. Xenopol”*, tom LVII (2020): 369-372. The attachment to the Catholic cause in Romania also materialized in Theodorian-Carada’s involvement, between 1921-1924, in the publicist project "Albina", promoted by the Nunciature.

<sup>18</sup> Dinu Bălan, "Chemarea străbunilor: Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada și activitatea lui istoriografică" [Calling the ancestors: Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada and his historiographic

and commentator of religious life in Romania. He vehemently criticized the spiritual immobility of antebellum Orthodoxy, condemning the selfish interests behind the promotions within the high clergy. He argued that the Romanian hierarchs were unable to convey any aspirations towards higher values to the faithful. His conviction was that a Church in servitude to politics (as was the case of the Orthodox Church in Romania, in his view), could not offer its pastors the means for cultural and spiritual elevation.<sup>19</sup> Instead, he admired the discipline upheld within the Catholic Church, the rigorous intellectual training undertaken by the clergy and the strategies used in the mobilisation of hundreds of millions of believers. Theodorian-Carada was influenced by the vitality of Catholicism, prompting him to embrace, at the end of the first decade of the last century, the doctrinal teachings of the universal Church, but in their Greek-Catholic iteration. After the end of the war, he campaigned for the idea of uniting the Orthodox Church in Romania with the Church led by the pope, but, from a practical viewpoint, his plans in this regard were rather unclear and unconvincing.<sup>20</sup> He frequented the Paschoptist leitmotif of a single Romanian Church, "which must be neither orthodox nor united, but simply a Romanian church," and which, the author of such a project hoped, "will one day unite with Rome."<sup>21</sup> Theodorian-

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activity], in *Perspectivile și problemele integrării în spațiul european al cercetării și educației* [Perspectives and problems of integration in the European area of research and education], vol. VII, partea 2 (Cahul: Editura Universității din Cahul, 2020), 326-328; Miltiade Adamescu, *Bibliografia tuturor scrierilor domnului Mariu Theodorian-Carada* [The bibliography of all the writings of Mr. Mariu Theodorian-Carada] (Bucharest: Institutul de Arte Grafice, 1923): *passim*. Mia Frollo, *Un scriitor original: Mariu Theodorian Carada* [An original writer: Mariu Theodorian Carada] (Bucharest: Tipografia „Dorneanu”, 1940).

<sup>19</sup> Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Decăderea Bisericei Ortodoxe Române și cauzele ei* [The downfall of the Romanian Orthodox Church and its causes] (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg, 1897): *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Theodorian-Carada's perspective on the binomial nation-confession (with a plea for the union of the Orthodox Church with the Church led by the pope), in his work *Biserica română din punct de vedere național* [The Romanian Church from the national point of view] (Bucharest: Tipografia Profesională Dimitrie C. Ionescu, 1913). See also Dinu Bălan, "Națiune și religie în România modernă: cazul lui Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada" [Nation and religion in modern Romania: the case of Mariu(s) Theodorian-Carada], in *Perspectivile și problemele integrării în spațiul european al cercetării și educației* [Perspectives and problems of integration in the European research and education], vol. VIII, part 2 (Cahul: Editura Universității din Cahul, 2021), 182-188.

<sup>21</sup> See Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Unirea Bisericii* [Union of Churches] (Galați: Tipografia "Moldova", 1928). The author also designed a project for the unification of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church, edited under the pseudonym Protosinghelul A. Otmenedec, *Unificarea Bisericii. Organizație autonomă și canonică* [Unification of the Church. Autonomous and canonical organization] (Bucharest: Tipografia Gutenberg,

Carada's attachment to the cause of restoring the faith unity of the Christian world was appreciated by the papacy, which granted him private audiences (the first, shortly after his conversion, in 1910)<sup>22</sup> and honoured him with the distinction of commander of the order of Saint Gregory the Great and with the cross *pro Ecclesia et Pontefice*.<sup>23</sup>

As a *homo novus* in the family of the Romanian subjects of the sovereign pontiff, Marius Theodorian-Carada did not show passive loyalty. Quite the contrary. He proved to be actively involved in numerous debates, projects and initiatives that, in one way or another, affected the future of the Church he had joined. This is what happened, for example, in the fall of 1918, when Theodorian-Carada assumed the task of developing, together with Ioan Bălan, the parish priest of the Saint Vasile church in Bucharest, a concordat project, which the Romanian authorities at that time were willing to negotiate with the Holy See.<sup>24</sup> The involvement of Theodorian-Carada in the respective endeavour is rather unsurprising, since he had proven his expertise in the matter of Eastern canon law by publishing a monumental work dedicated to the respective subject.<sup>25</sup> Then, in 1926, his status as a parliamentarian allowed Theodorian-Carada to demand an account from Vasile Goldiș, the holder of the portfolio of Cultes at that time, in connection with a ministerial decision, the consequence of which could have been the deprivation of the state subsidy of numerous parish communities not meeting the newly stipulated budgetary conditions.<sup>26</sup>

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1920). See also Dinu Bălan, "Un mediator între confesiuni: Marius Theodorian-Carada în jurnalul arhiepiscopului Raymund Netzhammer" [A mediator between confessions: Marius Theodorian-Carada as portrayed in the diary of Archbishop Raymund Netzhammer], in *Identități etno-confesionale și reprezentări ale Celuilalt în spațiul est-european: între stereotip și voința de a cunoaște* [Ethno-confessional identities and representations of the Other in the Eastern European space: between stereotype and the will to know], edited by: Cristina Preutu, George Enache; foreword by Gheorghe Cliveti (Iași: Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 2018), 83-102.

<sup>22</sup> Theodorian Carada, *Efimeridele. Însemnări și amintiri, 1908-1928*, 28-31.

<sup>23</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 166/29, doc. 1a (p. 1-18).

<sup>24</sup> Mariu[s] Theodorian-Carada, *Acțiunea Sfântului Scaun în România de acum și de întotdeauna* [The action of the Holy See in Romania now and always] (Bucharest: Editura Autorului, 1936), 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Dreptul canonic oriental cu adnotațiuni și comentarii de Mariu[s] Theodorian*, Avocat al Creditului Fonciar Român [Eastern canon law with annotations and comments by Mariu[s] Theodorian, Romanian Land Credit Lawyer], vol. I-III (Bucharest: Tipografia "Voința Națională", 1905-1907).

<sup>26</sup> The full speech, in the "Monitorul Oficial. Partea a III-a. Senatul" [Official Gazette, Part III. The Senate], no. 13 (1926): 131-132; no. 14 (1926): 176-179.

However, the fervent convert was actually most preoccupied with in the fate of the church community of which he was a member. Shortly after the end of the war, Marius Theodorian-Carada assigned himself to the role of leading the efforts to incorporate the believers in Bucharest into organizations designed to contribute to the preservation of their confessional identity and to invigorate religious life. It started with the Society of United Women "Sfânta Elena" [Saint Helene] founded on the initiative of the same Ioan Bălan, on 14 November 1920, "as a branch of the parish of Saint Basil."<sup>27</sup> Later, it was the men's turn to be included in a similar organization. The "Saint Paul" Society was thus founded in the summer of 1921, at the initiative of the new parish priest, George Dănilă. Marius Theodorian-Carada was part of the small group of believers in charge of revising the statutes of the respective organization, and, after their approval, he became the first president of the society. He was accompanied by the representative figures of the United Church: Zevovie Pâclișanu, Ștefan Ciceo-Pop, Ion Bianu, Iuliu Maniu, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Nicolae Sigmirean, Emil Pop, Octavian Tăslăuan, Aristotel Banciu, Titus Mălai, Teodor German, Laurențiu Oanea, etc.<sup>28</sup>

The concern for the well-being of the community of believers in Bucharest was also manifested in the form of the reports that Theodorian-Carada submitted to the Holy See, or to its various dicasteries. However, these reports were often sprinkled with critical tones towards the leaders of the United Church and of the manner in which they fulfilled their duties. One such situation occurred in the fall of 1926, when, being in Rome, Theodorian-Carada obtained an audience with the sovereign pontiff, on which occasion he handed the leader of the Catholic Church an extensive memorandum.<sup>29</sup> The author of that document intended to personally deliver a copy to the secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, something that ultimately did not happen, because Cardinal Luigi Sincero was not in Rome at that time. The memo finally came to the attention of the secretary of the high Roman dicastery, who noticed that, in addition to other issues detailed in the document (the conclusion of the Concordat between Romania and the Holy See, the founding of a faculty of Catholic theology within the University of Bucharest, the problem of the union of the Churches, the situation of the church donated to the Romanians in Rome or that of the Latin rite places

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<sup>27</sup> National Archives, Alba County Service (hereinafter A.N.S.J. Alba), *Mitropolia Blaj Fund. General registry. Registered documents*, file no. 2212 (1935): 1r.

<sup>28</sup> A.N.S.J. Alba, *Mitropolia Blaj Fund. General registry. Registered documents*, file no.1728 (1921): 2r-5r, 6r-v, 7r-v.

<sup>29</sup> The full text, at A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 1.

of worship in Romania given to the Greek-Catholic Church etc.), one raised certain questions about the functioning of the parish in the country's capital. More precisely, Theodorian-Carada condemned "le rit hybride et la langue artificielle ridicule," which the Ordinariate of Blaj introduced within the Greek-Catholic parish in Bucharest after it had administratively taken over that parish. Those innovations did nothing but drive away the Orthodox Romanians who had regularly attended the ceremonies at that church before. The impression created among the mass of believers by the conduct of these services was considered old-fashioned. The plaintiff dared to demand that the Holy See issue an order to the Romanian hierarchs on the subject of the practice used in all the parishes that were to be established in the Old Kingdom – namely, there was to be no deviation from the language, the rite and the clothing displayed by the Orthodox priests. This strategy was intended to serve as the foundation for the Catholic Church's efforts to bring closer the Orthodox communities in Romania. All the elements of liturgical and ritual novelty likely to deepen the chasm between the two Romanian Churches and to delay the fulfilment of the ecclesiastical unification ideal were attributed by the author of the document to the acculturative influences to which the united Church was subjected during the time it functioned within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian state, a state that subversively pursued the transformation of the Church into an instrument of the Hungarianization policy. The author of the document considered that it was a crucial measure for the United Church to abandon that customary "ballast" as quickly as possible, if it wanted to contribute to bringing its Orthodox blood brothers to communion with the Catholic Church.

A year later, the same Marius Theodorian-Carada wanted to transmit, this time from Bucharest, new observations related to the Greek-Catholic community in the capital of Romania.<sup>30</sup> Through a confidential message sent to Cardinal Luigi Sincero, the Romanian dignitary reaffirmed his attachment to the idea of church union, in which he had been working for many years, evoking the personal case that led him to join the Greek-Catholic Church in 1908. He then shifts the emphasis on the transformations that the Bucharest parish had gone through since its foundation or, more precisely, from the period of its tutelage by the Latin archdiocese of Bucharest to the way it functioned under the administration of the Archdiocese of Blaj. This time, the depicted image was also that of a decline in prestige, from a parish that had managed to

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<sup>30</sup> The document in its entirety, at A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 3.

coagulate not only the Greek-Catholic inhabitants of the capital of Romania, but also to attract numerous Orthodox believers, to one whose organization and functioning left much to be desired. In support of this statement, the issuer of the letter argued that the parish priest in charge of providing spiritual assistance to the Bucharest faithful was unable, due to the large influx of parishioners who requested his services, to fulfil all the duties that befell him, which is why he had been joined by two cöcelebrant priests. After the transfer of the community from Bucharest under the authority of the United Church, the two assistant priests were relieved of their duties. They were not replaced, despite the fact that the needs would have required it, considering the significant influx of Transylvanian Romanian believers, many of them of the Greek-Catholic denomination, on their way to the country's capital. Even though a subsidy for a second priest on behalf of the parish of Saint Basil could, in fact, have been obtained from the state authorities, the Ordinariate of Blaj preferred to send that newly ordained priest to Bucovina. Thus, the spiritual needs of thousands of Greek-Catholic believers from Bucharest were left practically unmet. Because of this, as Theodorian-Carada argued, there were a series of transitions to the Orthodox Church, which was encouraged by the propaganda carried out by several central newspapers. The innovations that the ecclesiastical authority from Blaj introduced in the Bucharest parish also contributed to these renunciations of the Greek-Catholic confession, the most regrettable being the replacement of the liturgical language with the dialect specific to the Blaj area, which the native Bucharest inhabitant did not understand. All these changes risked antagonising the idea of church union among the Romanians, especially since some desertions from the Greek-Catholic faith had also appeared in Transylvania, according to the issuer of the letter. He also felt compelled to suggest two quick remedies for the whole situation: the first, that in all united churches in Bucharest and in the Old Kingdom, the use of the Blaj dialect should be prohibited "*et qu'on doit dire et chanter Lord have mercy, Holy Spirit, etc.*"; the second, that the priests who were mandated to attend to the spiritual needs of the believers in Bucharest or those in the Old Kingdom were compelled to reside in the localities where those communities were located.

All these observations and recommendations that the Romanian dignitary made in the name of the cause of church union in Romania were treated with the utmost seriousness by the pontifical dignitaries. After receiving this last memorandum-complaint, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches appealed to the nuncio in Bucharest, asking him to verify whether or not the statements made by Marius Theodorian-Carada



were true.<sup>31</sup> After gathering information from trusted sources (including the Bishop of Oradea, Valeriu Traian Frențiu), Angelo Maria Dolci managed to formulate an answer in the form of two conclusive ideas.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the objection to the language of worship used in the Greek-Catholic church in Bucharest, it was true that it contained a series of particular expressions that significantly differed from the one heard in Orthodox places of worship. However, the differences in question would not actually be an issue for long, according to the nuncio. The Ministry of Religion had, in fact, taken, together with the Romanian Academy and representatives of the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, the initiative to standardize the liturgical language across the entire country. Thus, the elimination of the regional differences and the discouraging of various private initiatives was very likely. Regarding the spiritual assistance of the Greek-Catholic believers in Bucharest, estimated at that time at 20,000, two priests were clearly not enough to cover the pastoral needs of the respective community. A more effective solution, suggested by the Bishop of Oradea, was to entrust the Greek-Catholic Romanians living in Bucharest to a religious order, the most suitable of which was considered to be that of the order of Friars Minor from Moldova, who had shown themselves willing to be active in the *cura animarum* of the united Romanians.

In order to definitively put an end to the whole matter, the Congregation decided to address the Greek-Catholic Metropolitan of Blaj. Thus, a letter was written to Vasile Suci, on 12 May 1928, requesting him to provide a detailed explanation for the situation of the Greek-Catholic Romanians in Bucharest and the Old Kingdom and to propose improvements where inadequacies were found.<sup>33</sup> He was also explicitly asked for his opinion regarding the co-opting of members of a religious order to provide spiritual assistance to the groups of Greek Catholics in those areas, the direct reference being to the order of Friars Minor from Moldova, some of whose members had embraced the Romanian rite. The nuncio from Bucharest was also informed about the Congregation's initiative,<sup>34</sup> but the Romanian metropolitan did not delay sending the answer for long.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 5.

<sup>32</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 7.

<sup>33</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 10.

<sup>34</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 9.

<sup>35</sup> The full text, at A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 11.

The document signed by the prelate from Blaj is revealing regarding the state of the Greek-Catholic communities on the territory of the Old Kingdom. Simultaneously, it sheds light on the strategies used in recent years to organize those confessional groups and to invigorate the spiritual life within them. The first and rather surprising information transmitted is related to the fact that "il numero di questi fedeli, dispersi per tutto l'antico regno di Romania, come anche il numero di coloro, i quali habitano a Bucarest, non si sa." This is why their number could only be estimated at several tens of thousands, with the largest community naturally located in the country's capital. In order to uncover the number of believers dispersed across the territory of old Romania, the Metropolis ordered an action to register them and assigned two celibate priests to this task. The activity was stopped, however, as one of the two reviewer priests (incidentally, a graduate of the Greek College in Rome) was asked to deal with a series of endangered parishes within the archdiocese. In order for the spiritual needs of the believers in the extra-Carpathian space to be managed as efficiently as possible, efforts had been made to transfer the ecclesiastical authority exercised over them by the Latin rite bishoprics to the Metropolitan Ordinariate, an objective achieved, as we have already seen, starting with the year 1924. Immediately after that year, the first adjustments were made regarding the administration of those confessional communities. Thus, a celibate priest had been mandated on behalf of the Boian parish and was given the responsibility of taking care of the believers in Cernăuți and the bordering area. Regarding the parish in Bucharest, it was possible to obtain a subsidy from the government for a second priest, for two cantors and for a sacristan. In 1926, the works on the parish house, located near the place of worship, were completed. An urgent situation necessitated the relocation of the second priest from the capital to another locality, essentially rendering effective pastoral care among the faithful in the country's capital unfeasible.

The overall solution to the whole problem by sending other priests to the capital was impractical, for the simple reason that the Romanian Church did not have other celibate priests in its service, and the appeal to married priests was not profitable as long as there did not have the necessary conditions to support their families. Transferring part of the responsibility to the lack of a celibate clergy in the Greek-Catholic Church and to the pontifical courts, which in recent years had not been too generous with the places assigned to students from Romania in the educational institutions they patronized, Metropolitan Suciú considered it opportune to paint the structure of the archdiocese and the most

important data related to its operation. Thus, in the middle of 1928, the archdiocese of Alba Iulia and Făgăraș consisted of more than 700 parishes, totalling over 500,000 believers. Stretching over a significant area of the Transylvanian province, it was ethnically and religiously diverse, the most important religious alterities within it being the Orthodox, Lutheran, Calvinist and Jewish. Most of the 700 parishes functioned in mixed denominational localities, most often alongside the Orthodox Romanians, there being numerous cases in which the Greek-Catholic denomination was in the minority, lacking cult buildings or those intended for the residence of priests, a situation further complicated by the fact that the government did not provide any state subsidy to religious communities that did not reach a minimum number of believers in a parish. Those communities often had to face the pressure of the Orthodox majority, and, in order to improve the material situation of the priests who served them, the archdiocesan synod of 1927 decided to collect money from the priests from the wealthier parishes.<sup>36</sup> For the construction of churches in those parishes, in addition to voluntary contributions, the "Opera Pontificia della Propagazione della Fede" was repeatedly called upon, obtaining various amounts of money over time. Regarding the capital, Vasile Suciū's plan was to reach a total of five places of worship, four of them located in peripheral areas of Bucharest, and one in the central perimeter. This plan was known at that time to the pontifical officials and to the sovereign pontiff himself, from whom permission had been requested to give the chapel located in the Apostolic Nunciature to the Greek-Catholic Church. For the immediate needs of the faithful in Bucharest and those spread all over the territory of ancient Romania, the prelate considered that it was absolutely necessary for the Greek-Catholic Church to employ priests who not only had thorough theological and moral training, acquired in the educational institutions in Rome, but also assumed celibacy. Although no less than 150 future priests were trained in the seminary in Blaj at that time, few of them chose the path of celibacy, and the need for unmarried priests was dire, the prelate emphasized, since only they could be entrusted with missions in troubled parishes. They were also the most suitable to work at the archdiocesan chancellery or in the educational institutes in Blaj. Starting from these considerations, Metropolitan Suciū asked the Congregation to accept the addition of the number of places for Romanians at the College of *Propaganda Fidae* and at the Greek College. Regarding the involvement of the members of the order of Friars Minor in the pastorate of the parish in

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<sup>36</sup> See an in-depth approach to the entire issue in Turcu, *Between ideals and reality*, 495-517.

Bucharest, the Romanian prelate did not consider that very useful, since, at the level of common perception, the members of that congregation were associated with the Hungarians or with priests of the Latin rite, whom the Romanians did not regard too favourably. Calling on the services of conventual priests in the case of the Bucharest parish, instead of doing the Church good, could damage its image. If this were the case, the Orthodox circles would not hesitate to exploit it. A second great grievance expressed by the mitropolit in order to obtain the desired results in the organization of the communities of believers outside Transylvania referred to the construction of places of worship and parish houses. For this, significant sums of money were needed, which is why Vasile Suciú appealed to the generosity of the Congregation, stating that without treating that objective with utmost responsibility and involvement, there was a very real risk of losing the united believers, who were "drowning in a murky sea of orthodoxy." Aware that the pencilled plan would encounter numerous difficulties before it became a reality, Metropolitan Suciú concluded his report by expressing his hope that, in the future, he would also benefit from the help of the Holy See, which had repeatedly demonstrated its goodwill and generosity towards the Romanian Church.

The series of observations made by Theodorian-Carada regarding the way in which the Metropolis of Blaj managed the Greek-Catholic community in Bucharest continued in the following period.<sup>37</sup> Most often they were accompanied by other problems that the tireless convert did not hesitate to point out. At the end of the third decade of the last century, in addition to the worrying situation of the community in Bucharest caused by the persistence of the same shortcomings (the lack of an appropriate number of places of worship, the insufficiency of a single priest or suspicions of his immorality etc.), the suppliant wanted to express his position on topics such as: the creation of a confessional party in Romania, the founding of a large-circulation journal to support the project of the religious union of Romanians, or the transfer of the metropolitan residence from Blaj to Cluj, etc.<sup>38</sup> This time, the statements (some of them true accusations) made by the sender of the reports were counterbalanced by the official position of the Nunciature in Bucharest, an opinion that the Congregation for the Oriental Churches requested from its representative in Romania at that time.<sup>39</sup> In addition to the

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<sup>37</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 770/32, doc. 14.

<sup>38</sup> The full document, at A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 166/29, doc. 1a (p. 1-18).

<sup>39</sup> A.C.C.O., *Romeni. Affari generali*, 166/29, doc. 2-3.

clarifications and nuances made to what was said by Theodorian-Carada, the nuncio wanted to make a remark regarding the predisposition of the faithful pro-issuer to shed light on the shortcomings of the Church he had joined or of its religious leaders. In the prelate-diplomat's view, the reason behind it all was the fact that the great supporter of the project of uniting all Romanians with the Catholic Church did not feel fully appreciated from a political point of view, considering that he had been the protagonist of several failed experiences in the field of politics, having initially been an adherent of the political movement led by Alexandru Marghiloman, then of the party of Alexandru Averescu, and finally working in the field of Romanian liberalism. The nuncio was convinced that Theodorian-Carada, having been born and educated in pre-war Romania, used to relate to Romanians from Transylvania with feelings of superiority. This is how the pessimistic tone and harsh judgment, in some places, must be understood, "con cui giudica Blaj e la nostra Chiesa romano-unita," Dolci concluded his clarifying message.

Even so, the plans and the ideas expressed often insistently in the letter exchanges and in the press by Marius Theodorian-Carada bring additions to the overall image of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church in general and the community of believers in Bucharest in particular, during the first half of the last century. Even if it bears the imprint of an obvious religious zeal, his assessments, frequently adorned with critical tones towards the hierarchy and its decisions, had no other purpose than to indicate the path to be followed for the betterment of the Church and the Romanian community alike.



# Changes in the Recruitment of Transylvanian Local Government Representatives (Lord Lieutenants and Prefects) During and After the First World War

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**Abstract:** The study explores the changes in the Transylvanian Lord Lieutenants' corps during and after the First World War, using a prosopographical approach. The comparative analysis of the Lord Lieutenants' and prefects' corps in 1918-1919 aims to examine the impact of various political and regime changes on the recruitment of these high officials. In the autumn of 1918, one can already talk of a partial change of the elite, since part of the newly appointed Lord Lieutenants had a very different social and family background than their predecessors. When the political status of Transylvania changed, at the end of 1918 and in 1919, it brought further, more radical changes atop the administrative elite: the Hungarian Lord Lieutenants were replaced by Romanian prefects, who did have the necessary qualifications, but who had no prior experience in local government.

**Keywords:** Lord Lieutenant, prefect, elite change, Transylvania, 1918, First World War, recruitment

**Rezumat:** Studiul explorează schimbările din corpul comiţilor supremi transilvăneni în timpul Primului Război Mondial şi imediat după aceea, folosind o abordare prosopografică. Analiza comparativă a comiţilor supremi şi a prefectilor din 1918-1919 are ca scop examinarea impactului diferitelor schimbări politice şi de regim asupra recrutării acestor înalţi funcţionari. În toamna anului 1918, se poate vorbi deja de o schimbare parţială a elitei, deoarece o parte dintre comiţii supremi nou numiţi aveau un mediu social şi familial foarte diferit de cel al predecesorilor lor. Când statutul politic al Transilvaniei s-a schimbat, la sfârşitul anului 1918 şi în 1919, a adus alte schimbări, mai radicale, la vârful elitei

administrative: comișii supremi maghiari au fost înlocuiți cu prefecți români, care aveau într-adevăr calificările necesare, dar care nu aveau experiență anterioară în administrația locală.

**Cuvinte cheie:** comite suprem, prefect, elite și schimbare, Transilvania, 1918, Primul Război Mondial

The study will explore the changes in the Transylvanian Lord Lieutenants'/prefects' corps during and after the First World War – using a prosopographical approach –, to observe the impact of various political and regime changes on the recruitment of these high officials.<sup>1</sup> Although my research has examined several indicators, this paper will focus only on changes in the social background of the local government representatives.

*Legal status of the Lord Lieutenants/prefects*

Within the administrative system in Hungary, the key unit was the county (*vármegye*), which preserved a part of its autonomy and self-administration rights. However, this autonomy was increasingly diminished even before First World War. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, the public administration underwent major changes (Law XLII of 1870). These changes introduced increased competences for Lord Lieutenants – a trend that was to grow over the coming years. The main competence of the Lord Lieutenants – who represented the government in the counties – was to control the county administration and to ensure that government policy was enforced. They also functioned as presidents of the main body of the public administration, the county general assembly – made up of half of the elected members and half of the largest tax-payers (the so-called *virilists*). After 1876, administrative committees were formed in the counties to coordinate the activities of various branches of public administration, also headed by the Lord Lieutenants, whose influence became even stronger especially because of the disciplinary cases referred to the authority of the committee. A decade later, Law XXI of 1886 further expanded the competences of the Lord Lieutenants, they also became chief executive officers of the state bodies functioning on the territory of their county and, in special cases and when the “pressing interest” of the state

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were at stake, they had the power to issue decrees without consulting the county administrative body.<sup>2</sup>

After the outbreak of the First World War, they were also appointed government commissioners based on Law no. LXIII of 1912 regarding special measures in case of warfare.<sup>3</sup> This again increased their authority, because government commissioners had special powers, such as disposing of the legal and state institutions in their region of operation if needed. If the latter did not obey, their activity could be suspended by the commissioner.

After the war, Decree I of the Romanian Ruling Council, issued on 24 January 1919, temporarily and for the sake of continuity, left in force for the time being – with a few exceptions – the previous laws and decrees; it also made Romanian the official language. Therefore, during the transitional period, between 1919 and 1925, the old Hungarian laws remained in force, with several amendments. The powers of the prefects – as the Lord Lieutenants were now called – were determined by the provisions of Act XXI from 1886 and other laws and decrees concerning the public administration.<sup>4</sup>

Even though power started to be taken away from the local governments already in 1918, there was a marked difference between the public administration before and after 1918. The institution of the government commissioners somewhat anticipated the broad powers later bestowed on the prefects. Yet, all the powers the prefect had were dwarfed by those already provided by the Decree II of the Romanian Ruling Council (*Consiliul Dirigent*) by suspension of the municipal committees and the appointment of state officials who used to be elected. The Administrative Committee was maintained by decree, but its elected members were also appointed by the prefect. Latter decrees all provided the central power with a vigorous grasp over the institutions and officials of the local government – with more or less significant variations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Judit Pál, “Research on High Hungarian Officials in the Dual Monarchy: The Case of Transylvanian Lord-Lieutenants,” in *The Habsburg Civil Service and Beyond: Bureaucracy and Civil Servants from the Vormärz to the Inter-War Years*, eds. Franz Adlgasser – Fredrik Lindström (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2019), 149–166.

<sup>3</sup> Árpád Tóth, “A kivételes hatalom jogi szabályozása Magyarországon az első világháború előestéjén (The legal regulation of exceptional power in Hungary on the eve of the First World War),” *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae. Acta Juridica et Politica* 50, fasc. 13 (1996): 3–95.

<sup>4</sup> Augustin Galea, *Formarea și activitatea Consiliului Dirigent al Transilvaniei, Banatului și Ținuturilor românești din Ungaria (2 decembrie 1918 – 10 aprilie 1920)* (Târgu Mureș: Tipomur, 1996), 446–450.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The situation underwent another significant change following the administrative unification of Romania in 1925. Under the 1925 Act, the counties were headed by prefects, appointed by the government. On the one hand, the prefect represented state power and had a supervisory role, and on the other hand, he was the *de facto* head of the county administration, so that most of the pre-1918 deputy Lord Lieutenant's functions (*alispán*) were transferred to him.<sup>6</sup>

*The "traditional group" of the Lord Lieutenants*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the tendency was usually to appoint a respectable landlord from the region as lord-lieutenant. Variations of the same elements can be observed in the reasoning behind appointments even until the end of the World War. To give an example from a nomination proposal for a lord-lieutenant's position of 1917: "practical knowledge of public administration, excellent personal abilities, distinguished family and social ties, independent financial status, complete trustworthiness in politics and good sense in leading and handling public life" were the reassurances that this individual would be successful as a Lord Lieutenant.<sup>7</sup> Good social relations and an independent financial situation were stated in almost all recommendations, showing what the "archetype" of the Lord Lieutenant was in the eyes of the government over the entire period.

If we look at the last so called "traditional group" of the Transylvanian Lord Lieutenants appointed before the last year of the Great War and in office at the beginning of 1918, we will encounter a picture that reflects the dualist period.<sup>8</sup> Lord Lieutenants were appointed for an unspecified period by the ruler on the proposal of the Hungarian government (minister of interior), but it became customary that if the government resigned, so did the Lord Lieutenants – or at least they submitted their resignations. As political divisions deepened, there was an increasing turnover within the Lord Lieutenants corps, and in 1917,

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<sup>6</sup> Manuel Guțan, *Istoria administrației publice românești*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bucharest: Hamangiu, 2006), 202–203; Florin Andrei Sora, "A difficult modernization: the institution of the prefect in Greater Romania, 1918–1940," *Analele Universității București* 42, no. 1 (2014): 45–63. For changes in public administration, see: Judit Pál – Vlad Popovici, "Între autonomie și centralism: administrația comitatelor/județelor din Transilvania între 1867–1925," in *Pasiune și rigoare: noi tentații istoriografice: Omagiu profesorului Ovidiu Ghitta*, eds. Ionuț Costea, Radu Mârza, Valentin Orga (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut – Mega, 2022), 537–560.

<sup>7</sup> Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár, Országos Levéltár, MNL OL), K 148 Ministry of Interior, Presidential Acts, 1917–11–17404. Proposal regarding the appointment of Deputy Béla Barabás as Lord Lieutenant, 14 June 1917.

<sup>8</sup> The study covers only the 15 counties of historical Transylvania.

following the appointment of Count Móric Esterházy's government, there were significant changes in personnel. This was illustrated by the appointment of new Lord Lieutenants to head 12 of the 15 Transylvanian counties.<sup>9</sup> Only the two Saxon-dominated counties, Brassó (Braşov – Count Zsigmond Mikes) and Szeben (Sibiu – Friedrich Walbaum), and the Romanian county of Fogaras (Făgăraş – József Széll) retained their old Lord Lieutenants, but the latter also changed in the spring of 1918.

Many of the new Lord Lieutenants appointed in 1917 represented continuity, either personally or within their families, as members of the traditional elite that had been at the head of the Transylvanian counties for centuries. Baron Kázmér Bánffy was the son of Lord Lieutenant and later Prime Minister Dezső Bánffy; in the case of Count Sándor Bethlen, his uncle, his cousin and several of his other relatives had all been Lord Lieutenants; the uncle of the Lord Lieutenant of Hunyad (Hunedoara) county, Béla Pogány had occupied the same position in the same county before him. András Ugron, was the son of the famous (and notorious) opposition leader and MP, Gábor Ugron senior. His brother, Gábor Ugron junior, former Lord Lieutenant of Maros-Torda (Mureş-Turda) county was the Minister of interior in the Esterházy government, so it was he who ultimately recommended his then 32-year-old brother for the position.<sup>10</sup>

More than half of the Lord Lieutenants had been appointed after a long career in public administration. Friedrich Walbaum, the Lord Lieutenant of Szeben county – the only Lord Lieutenant of Saxon origin – had spent several decades in public administration before having been appointed. He started his career in Szeben county in 1886, then held various positions in Nagy-Küküllő (Târnava Mare) county; and from 1897 he was the mayor of Sighişoara (Segesvár/Schäßburg).<sup>11</sup> In 1910, during his mandate as a mayor, he was appointed Lord Lieutenant, a practice rather unusual in that period.

Changes are well-reflected in the fact that he was not the only mayor among the newly appointed Lord Lieutenants: György Lengyel, appointed as Lord Lieutenant of Udvarhely (Odorhei) county had been a secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, then chief county notary (*főjegyző*) in

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<sup>9</sup> Most of them were appointed by the monarch on 7 July. *Belügyi Közlöny* 22, no. 32 (1917) 999–1000.

<sup>10</sup> MNL OL K 27 Minutes of the Council of Ministers (Minisztertanácsi jegyzőkönyvek), July 3, 1917, no. 13.

<sup>11</sup> The data come from my own data collection, and for career information I have used, in addition to archival sources, the Officer's Directory (*Magyarország tiszti cím- és névtára*) published annually after 1886.

another county, then finally the mayor of Aiud (Nagyenyed) for two years. Béla Pogány and Aladár Király were Deputy Lord Lieutenants in the respective counties they have been appointed to as Lord Lieutenants. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant (*alispán*) was the head of the county clerks and also the highest position a person could be elected for in a county. Formerly, Király had been a public prosecutor for a long time. András Ugron, the Lord Lieutenant of Beszterce-Naszód (Bistrița-Năsăud), also spent more than a decade in the service of Maros-Torda (Mureș-Turda) county as a sheriff (*szolgabíró*) and later as high sheriff (*főszolgabíró*).

In contrast to the first group, there were some who were appointed Lord Lieutenants without any prior experience: some of them were lawyers and/or land owners. A special case was Nándor Inczédy-Joksmán, Lord Lieutenant of Maros-Torda county who had studied law, opted to pursue a career in the military afterward. He joined the Hungarian Noble Guard as a hussar captain in 1911, and held the rank of major in 1916.<sup>12</sup> Formerly military officers had been very rarely appointed as Lord Lieutenants and even if it happened, only retired officers were chosen.

Although there were many Lord Lieutenants of aristocratic origin, not everyone's career advancement was accelerated by their rank. Among the 15 Transylvanian Lord Lieutenants, five were of aristocratic origin, which concurs with the traditional custom.<sup>13</sup> However, a more in-depth scrutiny reveals that their case is not simply one of tradition living on. Baron Zsigmond Diószeghy found himself in quite a difficult position when the Károlyi government superannuated him in 1918; as he himself confessed: "besides the small, debt-ridden domain that I had inherited I had no other sources of income to secure a living for my family of six."<sup>14</sup> His career was rather atypical, in the sense that he was first a public clerk of lower status, then the mayor of the Zalău (Zilah) for 18 years. Count Sándor Bethlen, whose grandfather had also been the Lord Lieutenant of Torda-Aranyos (Turda-Arieș) county, was born an illegitimate child and was only later legitimized.<sup>15</sup> He had to start from the lowest position as

<sup>12</sup> *A magyar testőrségek évkönyve 1760–1918*, ed. Kálmán Hellebronth (Budapest: Stádium Sajtóvállalat, s. a.), 494.

<sup>13</sup> This is roughly the average for the whole period in Hungary. Magdolna Balázs, "A középszintű közigazgatási apparátus személyi állományának vizsgálata a dualizmus időszakában," *Történelmi Szemle* 29, no. 1 (1986): (116–124) 124.

<sup>14</sup> "[...] adóssággal túlterhelt kevés öröklött birtokomon kívül semmi más jövedelmi forrással nem rendelkezem, amiből hat tagból álló családomat eltarthatnám". Diószeghy to the Minister of Interior, November 21, 1918. MNL OL K 148 1918-11-690.

<sup>15</sup> János József Gudenus, *A magyarországi főnemesség XX. századi genealógiája*, vol. I (Budapest: Natura, 1990), 156.

well – probably his illegitimate birth also contributed to this –; still, when he was appointed Lord Lieutenant, he was only deputy chief county notary.<sup>16</sup> Even Kázmér Bánffy, the son of the former Prime Minister, despite his aristocratic origin, had to go through every step of the public administration ladder: he started as a public administration intern (*közigazgatási gyakornok*), then he served as sheriff, as a chief county notary, then in 1907 he became Deputy Lord Lieutenant and he was appointed Lord Lieutenant only at 51.<sup>17</sup>

All Lord Lieutenants held a university degree in law and political science, and several of them (40%) had even a PhD. Some of them were working as lawyers at the time of their appointment – Lajos Tolnay Lord Lieutenant of Csík County, former lawyer in Deva, Elemér Gyárfás, Lord Lieutenant of Kis-Küküllő County and Emil Petrichevich-Horváth, Lord Lieutenant of Nagy-Küküllő County, but the latter two also had smaller land holdings – a sign of the opening of a new era.

The later career of the Lord Lieutenants is not the topic of the paper hereby. Some of them continued to pursue their careers in Hungary, others remained in Transylvania. Among those in the first group, the brightest career was made by state secretary Emil Petrichevich-Horváth, the manager of the National Office for Refugees, representative in the House of Commons, a university professor who attracted contradictory opinions among his contemporaries. Among those who stayed in Transylvania, the most important role was played by Elemér Gyárfás, a former senator, the lay president of the Self-Governing Body of the Roman-Catholic Church of Transylvania, a leading member of the National Hungarian Party, and the president of the Hungarian Ethnic Community in Romania during World War II.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Lord Lieutenants of the Károlyi government*

The losses in the World War and the news about the dissolution of the Monarchy led to the breakout of the so-called Aster Revolution in Budapest by the end of October 1918. The government led by Mihály Károlyi came to power by promising instant measures to restore peace and democratic reforms, but mostly had neither the time nor the

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<sup>16</sup> We have to take into consideration that he was 15 years younger than Bánffy.

<sup>17</sup> The average age of appointment was between 40 and 50. Balázs, “A középszintű közigazgatási apparátus,” 124.

<sup>18</sup> See Gyárfás Elemér, a “civil püspök”. A Gyárfás Elemér halálának 70. évfordulója alkalmából tartott emlékkonferencia előadásai (Elemér Gyárfás, the “civil bishop”. Papers presented at the conference commemorating the 70th anniversary of the death of Elemér Gyárfás), ed. László Holló (Kolozsvár: Verbum Keresztény Kulturális Egyesület, 2016).

opportunity to put them into practice. To overcome the chaotic situation, it was important to consolidate the administration. New Lord Lieutenants were to be appointed to head the counties, but this was not easy, as each of the three parties in the coalition that formed the government wanted to gain as many positions as possible. The situation was further complicated by the emergence of multiple authorities. Everywhere in Hungary national councils were formed in the towns and villages and at county level, partly as a local initiative, but in most places mainly at the appeal of the National Council in Budapest. Later also the national militias were created. In Transylvania, national councils and militias were formed according to each nationality.<sup>19</sup>

Members of the coalition government engaged in intense debates regarding the appointments to Lord Lieutenant/government commissioner position, even on the eve of the catastrophe. "Even the preliminary appointments took a heavy toll on my nerves, since for every government commissioner position, I had to endure debates that lasted for several weeks" – wrote Kázmér Batthányi, the first Minister of the Interior of the Károlyi government.<sup>20</sup> For the moment he sent a telegraph to all Lord Lieutenants asking them "to continue to temporarily fulfil your duties in regard of the present extraordinary circumstances."<sup>21</sup> At first, his appeal was approved, but soon troubling news came regarding the failure of public security and public order. In this difficult situation, the Lord Lieutenants were also assigned the role of government commissioners.<sup>22</sup> Nándor Inczédy-Joksmán, the Lord Lieutenant of Maros-Torda County, in the same telegram, in which he indicated that he would be happy to fulfil his "patriotic duty", also referred to the fact that "anomalies concerning the demobilization of soldiers are also on the agenda in Maros-Torda County."<sup>23</sup>

Batthyány was heavily criticized by members of the government and by the national committees and the press for the appointment of

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<sup>19</sup> See Pál Hatos, *Az elátkozott köztársaság. Az 1918-as összeomlás és forradalom története* (The cursed republic: The history of the collapse and revolution of 1918) (Budapest: Jaffa, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> "Már az előzetes kinevezések is ugyancsak kemény próbára tették idegeimet, mert hisz minden egyes kormánybiztosi állás körül hetekig tartó harcokat kellett megvívnom [...]". Tivadar Batthány, *Beszámolómm* (My testimonial) (Budapest: Szépmíves, 2017), 402.

<sup>21</sup> "[...] a jelenlegi rendkívüli viszonyokra való tekintettel főispáni teendőket ideiglenesen továbbra is ellátni szíveskedjék." MNL OL K 148, 1918-11-8906.

<sup>22</sup> See Judit Pál, "The System of Government Commissioners during the First World War and the Organization of the Government High Commissioners Office in Transylvania," *Studia Universitatis „Babeş-Bolyai”*, *Historia*, vol. 63, no. 2 (2018): 62–98.

<sup>23</sup> "[...] katonák leszerelésével kapcsolatos rendellenességek Marostorda vármegyében is napirenden vannak". Inczédy-Joksmán to the Minister of Interior, November 11, 1918. MNL OL K 148, 1918-11-8906.

persons sympathizing with the former Labour Party (*Nemzeti Munkapárt*) government and for leaving formerly appointed people in their position. Batthyány himself opined that “the appointment of government commissioners was one of the major weaknesses,” by which they wanted to flunk his position.<sup>24</sup> In regard to this matter, he notes one case when in one of the counties with a population of mixed ethnicity he wanted to appoint a landlord of that county recommended also by István Apáthy, the president of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania and later high government commissioner for Transylvania and Eastern Hungary<sup>25</sup> and – what follows here is typical – “also by all the Transylvanian gentlemen sympathizing with us.” But Oszkár Jászi, the Minister of Nationalities “did an emphatic philippic” in the Council of the ministers against the appointee and he suggested instead “a local man whose name was unknown to everybody,” who turned out to be a county clerk and who established a “Jászi party” with three other fellows.<sup>26</sup>

The above case concerns the county of Kis-Küküllő (Târnava Mică). There, the former Lord Lieutenant, Elemér Gyárfás, who had resigned in the spring of 1918, organised the county’s Hungarian National Council and became its president. On 4 November, he appealed to the Minister of the Interior for the appointment of a new Lord Lieutenant. His candidate was László Kispál, “who has been enthusiastically championing the ideals of the Károlyi party in our county for years.”<sup>27</sup> Kispál was a member of the local Hungarian elite, and in the years around the war his name is mentioned as a landowner, mill owner and manager of a local bank. Afterwards, numerous urgings were sent to the Minister of the Interior, offering that if Kispál was not found suitable, someone else would be nominated. Meanwhile, the name of a 26-year-old comptroller also emerged as a possible candidate, reportedly recommended by the Romanian National Committee, as recently as early November. Subsequently, this candidate also received the support of the Civic Radical Party (*Polgári Radikális Párt*). Kispál tried to lobby for

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<sup>24</sup> Batthyány, *Beszámolóm*, 404.

<sup>25</sup> At the beginning of December, the Hungarian government appointed a high government commissioner and created a High Commissioner’s Office in Cluj, to which university professor István Apáthy was appointed. Yet, the Commissioner’s Office was in place only for a month and a half, since Romanian troops entered Cluj during the Christmas of 1918. See Pál, “The System of Government Commissioners.”

<sup>26</sup> Batthyány, *Beszámolóm*, 403–4.

<sup>27</sup> “[...] ki vármegyénkben évek óta lelkesen képviseli Károlyi-párt eszméit”. MNL OL K 803 PTI 606 f 3 Törvényhatóságok táviratai (Telegrams from municipalities), vol. 29. Kis-Küküllő vármegye.

himself, even by travelling to Budapest, arguing that “we are directly facing the Romanian occupation, and thus we are exposed to the Romanians themselves assuming control of the administration of a county where the majority is not Romanian.”<sup>28</sup> His appointment was also supported by Apáthy. On 23 November, however, on behalf of the local Radical and Social Democratic Party, a protest was lodged against the appointment of Kispál, who they presented as “a typical representative of the old chauvinist Junker system.”<sup>29</sup> The debate lasted until the end of the year and finally the position was filled by a prefect appointed by the Romanian Ruling Council. This case well exemplifies the struggles within the Council of Ministers. At the same time, this shows that although Apáthy tried to assert his authority, which in principle covered the whole of Transylvania, this was limited by the government at the top, but also by the various interest groups at the bottom.

Taking advantage of the revolutionary circumstances, new people appeared on the scene and established new parties, became part of the new governmental institutions, national councils and for a very short time they became part of the political games. This was likely a result of both insufficient information gathering power struggles. It is symptomatic that on the Council of Ministers of 12<sup>th</sup> November 1918, when a mass government commissioner appointment took place, from among the 15 Transylvanian counties, they managed to appoint a government commissioner in only three (Csík/Ciuc, Háromszék/Trei Scaune and Udvarhely/Odorhei – all three predominantly populated by ethnic Hungarians).<sup>30</sup>

Taking advantage of the revolutionary circumstances, new people appeared on the scene who established new parties, became part of the new governmental institutions, national councils and, for a very short time, they became part of the political games. In November and December of 1918, appointments were made in a state of panic. The revolutionary winds were reaching Transylvania, as well, a fact that was

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<sup>28</sup> “Közvetlen a román megszállás előtt állunk, és így annak vagyunk kitéve, hogy a románok maguk veszik át a gazdátlanná vált közigazgatást abban a vármegyében, amelynek majoritása nem román [...]”. Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> The period of administrative transition in the three counties is well explored: Botond Nagy, “Háromszék közigazgatása 1918–1940 között (The administration of Háromszék between 1918 and 1940),” *Areopolisz. Történelmi és társadalomtudományi tanulmányok* XIV (Székelyudvarhely 2015): 159–194; Csaba Gidó, “Udvarhely megye közigazgatás-története impériumváltástól impériumváltásig (1918–1940)”, *ibid.* 225–277; Csongor Szabó, “Csík vármegye közigazgatása 1918–1940,” *Magyar Kisebbség* 19, no. 3–4 (2014): 220–231; 20, no. 1–2 (2015): 221–270.



evidently apparent in the appointment of the Lord Lieutenants endowed with government commissioners' powers: novices who earlier had no chance of occupying such a position appeared on the scene. Some were lawyers, bank managers, secretaries of the former Lord Lieutenant, deputy town clerks and gymnasium professors. But the government also tried to convince some of the formerly appointed Lord Lieutenants to continue in their position – those who were willing and those to whom the appointing committee did not object too vehemently. However, an obvious proof of the difficulties is that in half of the Transylvanian counties the position of the Lord Lieutenant was not properly filled, given that the Deputy Lord Lieutenants were partly endowed with Lord Lieutenant powers.

The situation in Beszterce-Naszód county illustrates the chaotic situation of the last months: in the spring of 1918, András Ugron, the Lord Lieutenant, resigned, but his place was not filled; on 28 September, Nándor Inczédy-Joksmán, the Government Commissioner of the Maros-Torda (Mureş-Turda) County, was appointed to replace him; on 30 November, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant was appointed to take over the duties of the Lord Lieutenant; on 21 December, the Council of Ministers again appointed Ugron as Government Commissioner, but by then the Hungarian government had definitively lost control of the Transylvanian counties.

It was as a result of the agreements of the coalition parties that József Halász, a Social Democrat and the manager of the local Agricultural Bank was appointed Lord Lieutenant in Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely).<sup>31</sup> Halász was born in Western Hungary and came to Târgu Mureş (Marosvásárhely) as a bank clerk. There he was one of the initiators and organizers of the Free School for Workers and the Workers' Lodgings, he held presentations about Marxism and he also became the President of the Social Democratic party. Despite the fact that Minister Oszkár Jászi, when he resigned, argued, among other things, that "the spirit of the power apparatus remains the same,"<sup>32</sup> at the appointments of December leftist leanings can be easily observed. Social Democrats and radicals gained momentum. This was another sign of changing times since the Károlyi government rose to power.

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<sup>31</sup> "Szocialista főispán" (Socialist Lord Lieutenant), *Tükör* 6, no. 52 (19.11.1918): 1.

<sup>32</sup> Oszkár Jászi to Mihály Károlyi, December 10, 1918. In: *Károlyi Mihály levelezése* (Correspondence of Mihály Károlyi), vol. I. 1905–1920, ed. György Litván (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1978), 320–321.

*The new Transylvanian prefects*

After the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy lost the war, Transylvania and the Transylvanian public administration went through several radical changes. Even though the peace treaty was signed only in 1920, Transylvania became *de facto* part of Romania earlier. From the outset, it has been important for the Romanian Ruling Council to control the administration on all levels, if possible.<sup>33</sup> This process accelerated after the arrival of the Romanian army. The elite group of the Lord Lieutenants was also quickly and in a radical manner changed at the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919. Lord Lieutenants appointed by the Hungarian government were forced out and replaced by prefects appointed by the Ruling Council, which functioned as the interim regional government.

The prefects had to effectively manage and supervise the public administration of the county, but their position was also a political office. Prefects had powers that were both greater and lesser in comparison to Lord Lieutenants. Their main task was to take over the public services, to control the old civil servants still in office, to fill key-positions with trustworthy persons (mainly Romanians), and to create the Romanian public administration. And they did have the proper means to do just that.

Looking at who the Ruling Council appointed as prefects at the beginning of 1919 in Transylvania, we must note that they were very thoughtful about putting the very delicate matter of the transfer of power into the hands of properly qualified people. Upon the initial appointments, it becomes immediately apparent that all the individuals selected, with the exception of one, held a PhD. The exception was military officer Valer Neamțu, who was first appointed as a prefect of Ciuc (Csík) county, then to the most resistant county, Odorhei (Udvarhely) – in which case it is important to note that both were counties inhabited by a majority of ethnic Hungarians. The others – except for two physicians – were lawyers with a PhD in law. There are numerous studies about the role of lawyers in modern political life; from as early as the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a high percentage of the representatives of the House of Commons were lawyers.<sup>34</sup> However, in this case, we must also note that the Transylvanian Romanian elite was a

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<sup>33</sup> Gheorghe Iancu, *Contribuția Consiliului Dirigent la consolidarea statului național unitar român (1918–1920)* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1985).

<sup>34</sup> For their proportion among MPs, see: Maurizio Cotta, Heinrich Best, “Between Professionalization and Democratization: A Synoptic View on the Making of the European Representative,” in: *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848–2000. Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries*, eds. Heinrich Best, Maurizio Cotta (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 510–511.

rather narrow strata of the Romanian society and still a significant proportion of this elite were Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox priests.<sup>35</sup> Public servants who served under the Hungarian government – or some of them – were not deemed reliable enough, and were too few in number compared to the Romanian population, so it was obvious that qualified freelancer intellectuals should be appointed to such positions. Since in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, legal and political studies qualified a person to work as an official in public administration, lawyers were the most eligible for such a position. Even before 1918, the Lord Lieutenants were predominantly law graduates.

Most of the prefects graduated from the university of Cluj (Kolozsvár), but four of them pursued studies either partially or entirely in Budapest, while two of them studied in Vienna as well, the same as the two physicians.<sup>36</sup> Several of them attended university subsidized by the Gozsdu (Gojdu) Foundation,<sup>37</sup> since almost all of them came from families with modest means – as the data preserved in this regard shows: they came from families of peasants or teachers. It is known that two of them were sons of priests (Valentin Poruțiu and George Baiulescu)<sup>38</sup> and Silviu Moldovan's father was a sheriff for a period. In a paper co-authored with Vlad Popovici, we studied the county officials in office in 1925 and they had similar family origins.<sup>39</sup> The average age of the prefects was 51, but there was a wide range: the two oldest (George Baiulescu and Teodor Mihali) were 64, while the youngest was 36 (Marțian Căluțiu).<sup>40</sup>

The most renowned of the prefects appointed in 1919 was Teodor Mihali who probably initially set out to become more than a mere prefect. Mihali was also a lawyer in Dej, the seat of Solnoc-Dăbâca (Szolnok-

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<sup>35</sup> The role of the lay intelligentsia, however, increased significantly during the period of dualism, and they took over the leadership of the national movement early on. See Vlad Popovici, "Elita politică românească în Transilvania (1861-1881). O perspectivă alternativă," in: *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Seria Historica*, 14 (2010): 213–227.

<sup>36</sup> For brief biographies of several of them, see Vasile Lechințan, *Oficiali de stat români din Transilvania (1368–1918)* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2003).

<sup>37</sup> Most of the scholarship holders studied law. Maria Berényi, *Istoria Fundației Gojdu (1870–1952) / A Gozsdu Alapítvány története (1870–1952)* (Budapest: Societatea culturală a românilor din Budapesta, 1995), 47–48.

<sup>38</sup> Rozalinda Posea, "George Baiulescu – aspecte din activitatea de pedagog și medic la Brașov," in: *Țara Bârsei*, 9 (2010): (108–112) 108.

<sup>39</sup> Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici, "Corpul prim-pretorilor din Transilvania între 1918 și 1925. O analiză prosopografică," in: *Servitorii Statului: funcționari, funcții și funcționarism în România modernă (1830-1948)*, eds. Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici, Andrei Florin Sora (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2022), 241–275.

<sup>40</sup> The dates of birth of three people could not be found.

Doboka) county. Additionally, he was one of the founders of the local Romanian bank and Romanian club (*Casina*), a supporter of and an organizer in the local branch of the Romanian Cultural and Literary Association (ASTRA) and in general of the social and cultural life of the Romanians. Since 1905, he was a Parliament representative of the National Party of the Romanians and he was one of the authors of the declaration that Alexandru Vaida-Voevod read in front of Parliament in which self-government was declared in 1918 in the name of the Romanians of Hungary. He was one of the vice-presidents of the Great Romanian National Assembly of Alba Iulia and of the Great Council. And, after George Pop de Băsești's death in 1919, he became leader of the National Romanian Party. Despite of all of the above involvements and accomplishments, he was not appointed to any nationally important office. It is probable that his disappointment was one of the factors that made him leave the party in 1920 and become a member in the People's Party (*Partidul Poporului*) lead by Alexandru Averescu alongside the group lead by Octavian Goga. Later, he was a representative in the Romanian House of Commons, a senator and also the mayor of Cluj (1926, 1927-1931).<sup>41</sup>

Prefects in general – as Lord Lieutenants were named after 1919 – were appointed from among members of the Romanian elite that were active and dedicated to the Romanian national interests. They used to take part in the events of the local branches of the ASTRA and the activities of the Romanian National Party, five of them were also members of the Central Electoral Committees.<sup>42</sup> Many of them also took part in the founding and management of the local Romanian banks. Octavian Vasu, a former World War I prisoner, even became one of the organizers of the Romanian Volunteer Corps in Russia, who went to fight for the Romanian army.<sup>43</sup> Lawyer Zosim Chirtop of Câmpeni, who had been sentenced to prison by the Hungarian authorities, and physician Nicolae Comșa of Săliște, who had been forcefully relocated to Sopron during the war, came to be considered martyrs of the Romanian national cause. Most of them were delegates to the Romanian National Assembly in Blaj and were also on the list drawn up for the Romanian army comprising reliable Romanians in Transylvania.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Lazăr Marian, *Primarii Clujului, 1919–2012*, vol. I (Cluj-Napoca: s. n., 2013), 56–63.

<sup>42</sup> See Vlad Popovici, *Studies on the Romanian political elite from Transylvania and Hungary (1861-1918)* (Cluj-Napoca: Mega, 2012), 73–78.

<sup>43</sup> [https://dspace.bcucuj.ro/bitstream/123456789/82739/1/Vasu\\_Octavian.pdf](https://dspace.bcucuj.ro/bitstream/123456789/82739/1/Vasu_Octavian.pdf) (10.9.2023).

<sup>44</sup> Cornel Grad. "Contribuția armatei la preluarea și consolidarea Imperiului în Transilvania (noiembrie 1918 – iunie 1919)," in: *95 de ani de la Marea Unire. Volum omagial*,

There is no reliable source for the exact background of the appointments, but according to several sources and the memoirs of several contemporaries, the opinion of the local Romanian elite was taken into consideration, as well, as illustrated by the example of Târnava Mică county. In the case of several prospects considered, it is probable that their popularity and personal connections also played a role. At that moment, the Bucharest government did not wish to have a say in the appointments. They lacked both the familiarity with the specific locations where appointments were necessary and knowledge of the most suitable local individuals to fill those positions.

As far as locals are concerned, the situation was similar to the one before 1918: the Ruling Council intended to make appointments from among the socially and politically active local Romanian elite. In fact, except in the Székelyland, locals were appointed everywhere. For example, in Târnava Mare county the Ruling Council appointed lawyer Dionisie Roman, a man who was well-liked by the Saxon community as well. He had been a pupil in the Saxon Gymnasium of Mediaș and, therefore, he not only spoke excellent German, but he was also fluent in the local Saxon dialect. However, for the counties of Székelyland with a Hungarian speaking population, prefects of Romanian origin were appointed – the practice was the same as before 1918, only this time the Romanians, not the Hungarians, were favoured. In Ciuc (Csík) county, lawyer Silviu Moldovan from Orăștie was appointed first, followed by lawyer Gheorghe Dubleșiu from Hunedoara; in county Trei Scaune (Háromszék) lawyer Nicolae Vecerdea from Brașov and to Odorhei (Udvarhely), as formerly mentioned, lieutenant-colonel Valer Neamțu.

The careers of these first prefects show that, usually, this appointment was a promising first step on the career ladder: more than a third of them later became representatives in the Romanian Parliament (in the House of Commons or the Senate) and several of them were appointed as prefects for the second time: after his term in Ciuc county, Silviu Moldovan was appointed prefect of Arad county (1920-1921), then he became the president of the Courthouse in Arad; Marțian Căluțiu, the prefect of Târnava Mică county then became the prefect of Cojocna (Kolozs) county between 1926-1927; Gheorghe Dubleșiu after his term in

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ed. Marius Grec (Arad: „Vasile Goldiș” University Press, 2013) (215–261), 248–253. For biographical data see: *Contribuția avocaților din Transilvania și Banat la Marea Unire* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2018); *Dicționarul personalităților Unirii. Trimișii românilor transilvăneni la Marea Adunare Națională de la Alba Iulia*, eds. Ioan I. Șerban, Nicolae Josan (Alba Iulia: Altip, 2003).

Ciuc county became prefect of Hunedoara county (1922-1926); Ioan Vescan after his term was a member in the Senate and then again a prefect in Mureș-Turda county (1928-1931, 1932-1933). Nicolae Vecerdea, prefect of Trei Scaune county obtained high positions at the High Court of Cassation.<sup>45</sup> The highest position occupied by Ioan Pop, the first Romanian prefect of Alba de Jos (Alsó-Fehér) county, was deputy secretary of state in the Ministry of the Interior, while Teodor Mihali – as mentioned above – became mayor of Cluj. There were also some who returned to their original professions, such as Valentin Poruțiu, who worked as a lawyer in Cluj.<sup>46</sup>

### *Conclusions*

The centralization of administration, and the gradual extension of state control, mainly through the Lord Lieutenants, was a process that had already started in pre-war Hungary, and it was further intensified during World War I, by the appointment of some of the Lord Lieutenants as government commissioners with increased powers. However, we find no change in the social composition of the Lord Lieutenants corps. Major changes can only be observed during the Károlyi government, which came to power in the autumn of 1918, following the so-called Aster Revolution. In Transylvania, however, some of the Lord Lieutenants appointed by the Károlyi government were no longer able to take office, because of the chaos caused by the disintegration of the administration, and in December 1918 the takeover of power by the Romanian Ruling Council began.

The research conducted by Florin Andrei Sora shows that, during the inter-war period in Transylvania, the local Romanian elite managed to maintain its position in the local government, obtained in 1919 and 1920, and was rarely replaced by Romanians from the Old Kingdom. Naturally, the counties dominated by a non-Romanian population were an exception to that rule. The National Liberal Party, which had a great political tradition and which was the ruling party both before 1918 and during the majority of the period after, also realized that they had to win over the local elite in order to be successful during elections. Therefore, they usually named a local prefect loyal to the party in the Transylvanian counties. Whenever this failed to occur, the result was always

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<sup>45</sup> According to Vasile Ciobanu, his appointment in 1924 was a reward for helping the Liberal Party gain power in Sibiu County. Vasile Ciobanu, "Reorganizarea Partidului Național Român în anii 1919-1922. Studiu de caz: județul Sibiu", in: *Acta Musei Porolissensis*, 36 (2014): (213–240) 234.

<sup>46</sup> [https://dspace.bcucuj.ro/bitstream/123456789/82848/1/Porutiu\\_Valentin.pdf](https://dspace.bcucuj.ro/bitstream/123456789/82848/1/Porutiu_Valentin.pdf) (15.09.2023).

discontent among the locals. In order to be appointed prefect, one had to be a loyal party member and have good connections, both locally, but – more importantly – to the party leadership. During the inter-war period, the social background of the prefects changed, as well: an increasing number came from less wealthy families, and it was the position itself that conferred significance upon the person, rather than the status of the individual enhancing the prestige of the role. An interesting new tendency subsequently emerged, namely that military officers (between 1926 and 1932 24% of the prefects had been military officers) and priests, even bishops were appointed prefects in quite a significant number: between 1931-1932 a Greek Catholic priest was the prefect of Făgăraș county, for example and bishops were the prefects of Satu Mare, Sibiu and Hunedoara counties.<sup>47</sup> The ethnic loyalty and commitment of both groups were probably a significant aspect in their appointment, in addition to the fact that they were considered apolitical and incorruptible. Moreover, in the case of military officers, the expectation to uphold law and order “with an iron fist,” especially in the bordering counties and the counties populated by other ethnic groups, was also added. Therefore, it cannot be considered a mere coincidence that a military officer was appointed in 1919 as the prefect of Odorhei county, where the population was of Hungarian ethnicity.<sup>48</sup>

An overview on the sequence of Lord Lieutenants/prefects shows that, until 1918, the group of the Transylvanian Lord Lieutenants was characterized by a slow change. Although the change of the ruling party did result in people being replaced, there was no replacement of the elites. Another slow change can be observed in the group of Lord Lieutenants in office during the outbreak of World War I – most of them came to this position after having served, for a long time, as officials in the public administration of the county, and almost all of them had legal qualifications. In the autumn of 1918, a partial change of the elite took place, since part of the newly appointed Lord Lieutenants had a very different social and family background than their predecessors and most of them did not have any experience in working in the local government.

Then, when the political status of Transylvania changed, it brought radical modifications in the elite: in every county, the Hungarian Lord Lieutenants were replaced by Romanian prefects, who did have qualifications, but had no prior experience in the local government. Since the Lord Lieutenant/prefect held a key position in the county as the

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<sup>47</sup> Sora, *A difficult*, 56–62.

<sup>48</sup> Sora, *A difficult*, 62.

representative of the government, reliability was a highly important trait. If we look at the similarities between the two turning points in Transylvanian history, in both cases, the Lord Lieutenants/prefects played an important role in state and nation building. Following 1867, the Transylvanian Hungarian elite, and after 1918, the Transylvanian Romanian elite, both successfully maintained much of their influence at the local level, as reflected in the appointment of Lord Lieutenants/prefects.



<b>County</b>	<b>Lord lieutenants in 1914</b> (initial year of the office)	<b>Lord lieutenants in office at the beginning of 1918</b>	<b>Government commissioners appointed in Nov.-Dec. 1918</b>	<b>Prefects in 1919</b>
Alsó-Fehér/ Alba de Jos	József Szász (1910)	Baron Kázmér Bánffy	Kálmán Asztalos / Albert Fogarasi	Ioan Popu
Beszterce-Naszód/ Bistrița-Năsăud	Jenő Fejerváry (1910) / Count Balázs Bethlen (from 2. 11. 1914)	András Ugron / Nándor Inczédy-Joksman	András Ugron	Gavril Tripon
Brassó/ Braşov	Count Zsigmond Mikes (1906)	Count Zsigmond Mikes	Deputy Lord lieutenant	George Baiulescu
Csík/ Ciuc	Sándor Gyalókay (1910)	Lajos Tolnay	Domokos Györgypál	Silviu Moldovan / Valer Neamțu/ Gheorghe Dubleşiu
Fogarás/ Făgăraş	József Széll (1907)	György Lengyel		Octavian Vasu
Háromszék/ Trei Scaune	Baron Béla Szentkereszt y (1910)	Aladár Király / Baron János Bornemisza	Aladár Király	Nicolae Vecerdea
Hunyad/Hunedoara	László Mara (1910)	Béla Pogány	Lajos Szentiványi	Toma Vasinca
Kis-Küküllő/ Târnava Mică	Baron Ákos Kemény (1906)	Elemér Gyárfás	Elemér Gyárfás	Marcian Căluțiu
Kolozs/Cojocna	Count Ödön Bethlen (1913)	Zoltán Velits	Emil Grandpierre	Simeon Tămaş
Maros-Torda/ Mureş-Turda	József Szász (1912)	Nándor Inczédy-	József Halász / József Szenner	Ioan Vescan

		Joksman		
Nagy-Küküllő/ Târnava Mare	István Somogyi (1910)	Baron Emil Petrichevich -Horváth	Julius Schaser	Dionisie Roman
Szeben/ Sibiu	Friedrich Walbaum (1910)	Friedrich Walbaum	Friedrich Walbaum	Nicolae Comşa
Szolnok-Doboka/ Solnoc-Dăbâca	Count Balázs Bethlen (1910)	Baron Zsigmond Diószeghy	Miklós Torma	Teodor Mihali
Torda- Aranyos/Turda- Arieş	Miklós Betegh (1910)	Count Sándor Bethlen	Gábor Kemény	Zosim Chirtop
Udvarhely/ Odorhei	János Ugron (1912)	György Lengyel / Ákos Ugron	Ferenc Valentsik	Valer Neamţu

# Culture, Travels and National Identity in Transylvania in the Aftermath of the Great War

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**Abstract:** In the aftermath of the Great War, the Kingdom of Romania significantly expanded its territory and population by incorporating Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bucovina. Despite the enthusiasm that accompanied the “Great Union”, integrating these culturally distinct areas proved to be a complex and challenging process. Alongside political and administrative unification, the Romanian state faced the task of bringing together populations with different histories and cultural backgrounds. This integration involved not only formerly dominant ethnic groups but also Romanians who had lived and defined themselves as a national community within different contexts. Various debates emerged among the Romanian elites regarding the means of achieving cultural and spiritual unity. One of the factors perceived as hindering the profound unification was the fact that the Romanians from the Old Kingdom and those from the newly acquired provinces were unfamiliar with each other’s culture, habits and customs. Although cultural contacts and transfers had indeed existed before the war, the new context necessitated broader engagement, and the ties needed to be extended to a larger segment of the population. One suggested solution was to promote tourism and travel between the Old Kingdom and the new provinces, so as to foster better understanding, familiarity, and unity among Romanians. By examining journal articles, travel notes and memoirs, the main issue addressed by the present paper is the manner in which tourism and travel fostered cultural and social bonds among Romanians from different areas of Greater Romania, reinforcing a shared sense of national identity.

**Keywords:** Greater Romania, unification, integration, nation, culture, Transylvania, travel, memoirs.

**Rezumat:** La sfârșitul Marelui Război, Regatul României și-a extins semnificativ teritoriul și populația prin încorporarea provinciilor Transilvania, Basarabia și Bucovina. Deși aceste provincii aveau o populație majoritar românească, ele erau dominate politic, cultural și economic de alte grupuri etnice. În pofida entuziasmului „Marii Uniri”, integrarea acestor zone cu o istorie și culturi diferite s-a dovedit a fi un proces complex și plin de provocări. Chiar și comunitățile românești din aceste regiuni trăiseră și se definiseră ca și comunitate națională în contexte diferite. Anii de debut ai perioadei interbelice au fost marcați de dezbaterea privind mijloacele de realizare a integrării și unificării spirituale a noilor provincii. Unul dintre factorii percepuți ca fiind un obstacol în calea unității depline era faptul că românii din Vechiul Regat și cei din provinciile nou dobândite nu sunt familiari unii cu alții, nu își cunosc cultura, obiceiurile și tradițiile. Deși contacte și transferuri culturale au existat și înainte de război, noul context al României Mari necesita un angajament mai larg, iar legăturile trebuiau extinse la un segment mai mare al populației. Printre soluțiile propuse s-a aflat și aceea a cunoașterii reciproce, prin călătorii și vizite de o parte și de alta Carpaților, pentru a încuraja o mai bună înțelegere, familiaritate și unitate în rândul românilor. Analizând articole de presă, note de călătorie și memorii, prezenta lucrare abordează modul în care turismul și călătoriile au stimulat legăturile culturale și sociale între românii din diferitele regiuni ale României Mari, consolidând sentimentul de apartenență la aceeași comunitate națională.

**Cuvinte cheie:** România Mare, unificare, integrare, națiune, cultură, Transilvania, călătorie, memorialistică.

In the history of the Romanian people, the year 1918 stands as one of the most important dates, as the end of the First World War marked the creation of Greater Romania, extending the Old Kingdom's borders to include the provinces of Bessarabia, Bucovina, Transylvania – areas where there were significantly large Romanian communities who had long lived under the rule of the neighbouring Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The profound significance of this moment has long dominated Romanian historiography's approach to the interwar period, an approach that emphasized the successes and accomplishments of the period, disregarding its challenges and failures. This perspective, shaped

in the aftermath of the Great War,<sup>1</sup> was abandoned after the Second World War, only to be rediscovered by the national-communist regime and reasserted after its fall, when Romanians looked once again towards the West, re-embracing the model that governed the development of modern Romania. Consequently, post-communist Romanian historiography has viewed the interwar period through the lens of a “golden age” in Romanian history, focusing, once again, more on its accomplishments and less on its hardships.<sup>2</sup>

However, the transition towards a democratic society proved to be longer and harder than expected. Old conflicts and dilemmas were revived, revealing the incomplete path towards the modernity of Romanian society, as many of its important lessons were still ongoing when the Iron Curtain fell on Europe. One of the darkest episodes of the aftermath of the fall of Ceausescu’s regime was the interethnic conflict of March 1990 in the town of Târgu Mureș, known as the “*Martie Negru*” (Black March), a violent confrontation between Romanians and Hungarians, proving that old wounds were still open. Furthermore, the challenges encountered during the transition toward an open and liberal society rekindled a sense of peculiarity among the historic provinces comprising Romania. Resurging sentiments of distinctiveness reflected the limitations of the Greater Romania project undertaken in the aftermath of the First World War to forge a seamlessly united nation. As these feelings of particularity and specialness persist, they disrupt the view of the interwar period as an ideal national era, compelling a deeper introspection on the manner in which Greater Romania chose to integrate both the different ethnicities of the areas it incorporated, and the Romanians themselves. Despite sharing a common ethnicity, they had lived for a long time in different national and cultural background and had their own particularities. In fact, despite the enthusiasm for the “Great Union”, it soon became clear that merging different cultural areas was not an easy task and frustrations arose on both sides of the Carpathians. On the one hand, the Romanians from Transylvania started to feel once again oppressed by the state, criticising the policy of Bucharest:

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<sup>1</sup> One of the works considered a model of interpretation in this regard is the monograph by Ioan Lupaș, entitled, *Istoria Unirii Românilor* [The History of the Union of the Romanian], published in 1937 in the collection “*Cartea satului*,” edited by “Prince Carol” Cultural Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> For the historiography of the Great Union, see Valer Moga and Sorin Arhire, *Anul 1918 în Transilvania și Europa Central-Estică. Contribuții bibliografice și istoriografice* [The Year 1918 in Transylvania and Central-Eastern Europe: Bibliographical and Historiographical Contributions] (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2007).

"Like the Hungarians, who came from the Puszta - with the mission of great patriots, with airs and graces of making us Hungarians - to teach us the Hungarian mind, some of our 'brothers' from Bărağan have come to teach us, once again, us, whom in their opinion, we don't even know Romanian (the Hungarians persecuted us for knowing too much). But as Hungarians left, so will go these ones if they don't behave well. They need to learn this once and for all: Transylvania is not a colony."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, in the Old Kingdom "...words that, before the Great Union, no one would have dared to whisper,"<sup>4</sup> were starting to be loudly and vehemently expressed, generating a feeling of distance and separation among brothers:

"...who, although are now together, so close, they are still so far away... however great was the love that pushed us together, with its majestic impetuosity, in an embrace that shall live forever, to assume that in a few years of living together, a people shaped in a different background from ours, can be moulded into our physiognomy is an approach that on the long way can generate only the opposite of what we want."<sup>5</sup>

The necessity to discourage these attitudes and consolidate the nation preoccupied the social and cultural elites, who emphasized the urgency of a cultural and spiritual unification of the Old Kingdom and the new provinces. But this was a difficult and an "à la longue" objective and the ways and means of putting it into practice generated debates amongst those advocating for one way or another. Some emphasized the role of education, and subsequently of the school and of the state, others advocated the role of the Church, which had a long tradition, especially in Transylvania, in the process of educating the nation. Many emphasised the potential role of cultural and social associations, which had long served as primary conduits for dialogue between the Old Kingdom and

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<sup>3</sup> "Din « fapte » celor ce produc desbinare în Sibiu" [From the "actions" of those causing disorder in Sibiu], *Foia poporului*, no. 28 (13 July 1924): 5.

<sup>4</sup> "Gânduri de ziua învierii: autonomia Transilvaniei" [Thoughts on Resurrection Day: The Autonomy of Transylvania], *Patria*, IV, no. 88 (16 April 1922): 1.

<sup>5</sup> Al. Ciura, "Scrisori din Ardeal" [Letters from Transylvania], *Viața românească*, XII, no. 1 (March 1920): 131-132.

Romanians residing in neighbouring empires before the war. These associations played a crucial role in initiating and promoting significant cultural exchanges, fostering a sense of shared identity and belonging.

The debates around the necessity of accomplishing, alongside the administrative and political unification, the cultural and spiritual integration of the new areas and their communities into the Romanian state and society, also raised the issue of the causes that favoured the persistence of a feeling of separation and difference, of the sentiment of "two worlds that are constantly trying to unite but constantly reject each other."<sup>6</sup> One of the recurrent factors asserted as nourishing this feeling of estrangement between the "old" and "new" Romanians was the fact that they knew little of each other. This lack of knowledge was a fertile ground for those attempting to undermine the strength of the Romanian state. Hence, the need to get acquainted, to become familiar with the "other", with their habits, customs, interests, concerns, or joys, was considered of a great importance in the accomplishment of the desired national unification.

"We don't know our country – and this is a great shame! To accomplish the spiritual unification of our new Romania, it is mandatory to get to know our brothers from the other provinces and their lands."<sup>7</sup>

All things considered, the present paper addresses the role played by tourism and travelling in the aftermath of the Great War in this process of reciprocal acquittance between the Romanians from the Old Kingdom and those from the new provinces. Why tourism and travelling? Many of the voices raising the issue of the Romanians' unfamiliarity with each other considered that this could change, if more and more people crossed the Carpathians and got to know the others, within the reality of their everyday lives:

"In this way, we will get well acquainted, and we will honour the efforts made by each of us for the emancipation of our economic and ethnic life, which is in fact the same in Transylvania and in the Old Kingdom, as it is in all the other

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<sup>6</sup> I. Joldea Rădulescu, "Călătorind prin Ardeal" [Traveling through Transylvania], *Patria*, V, no. 78 (15 April 1923): 1.

<sup>7</sup> Ion C. Roboșanu, "Cursuri de vară și excursiuni de studii la noi și în străinătate" [Summer Courses and Study Trips at Home and Abroad], *Lumea universitară*, 1, no. 4 (1<sup>st</sup> of April 1922): 55.

parts of the country, which have been for so long kept apart. By falling into the habit of travelling, we will come to know each other better, and the chaff will sift from the wheat. We could see the flaws each of us has and we won't pay so much attention to exaggerations. On the contrary, we would be in a better position to see the good features, on the grounds of which one could build the long-lasting skeleton of our bonding, so needed by our people in the days we are living."<sup>8</sup>

Travelling and visiting the country were deemed as a good way of acquiring a profound perspective on the particularities and characteristics of each area, thus generating a better understanding of those who lived there:

"To know your country, not through the venom of the daily gazettes, nor through the defamatory political newspapers, but with your own eyes, chatting with a peasant in a rail station or a village, or with a priest, a teacher or an intellectual. And to honestly share thoughts and wishes for wellness. This is the true path to heal our country's sins and pains."<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, those having these experiences could share their new knowledge with those back home, inspiring others to open their horizons and encouraging the desire to know and appreciate the truth of the country for further generations:

"And I always reflect on this. The teacher all the way from the Ceremuş River or the priest from a village of Orhei will return to his quiet household, to his school or to his church, and will plant the seeds of truth in the hearts of the youngsters who will replace him."<sup>10</sup>

As a matter of fact, travels played an important part in the process of the modernization of Romanian society before the First World War, as they represented one of the main channels through which Romanian

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<sup>8</sup> I. Simionescu, "Ateneul din Tătăraşi" [The Athenaeum of Tătăraşi], *Viitorul*, 22, no. 6448 (11 August 1929): 3.

<sup>9</sup> Const. Cerhan-Racoviţă, "Înfrăţire sufletească" [Spiritual Brotherhood], *Cultura Poporului*, IV, no. 69 (20 July 1924): 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



elites encountered, in the long nineteenth century, the European culture and started to embrace its model, gradually estranging the Romanian society from the Orient and pushing it towards the Western civilization – a model that remained the reference point after the Great War. Nonetheless, travel memoirs have raised little interest in the Romanian historiography, although their cultural and educative utility, alongside their aesthetic value has been well established in the European historiography. Historians frequently infused an ideological perspective when addressing this subject, often taking the memoirs out of their context. When the testimony did not correspond with the doctrinal imperatives, such as the historical indestructible unity of the Romanian people, it was suppressed.<sup>11</sup> As travel testimonies not only reveal information about the places and the people they describe, but they also reflect the changes of mentalities and perceptions, the metamorphosis of taste and daily sensibilities, they offer an insightful perspective on the way in which the merging of the new provinces into the Old Kingdom was experienced, both by the “old” and by the “new” citizens of Romania. Thus, the present paper, primarily focused on journal articles, travel notes and memoirs addresses the trips undertaken in and from Transylvania with the purpose of getting acquainted and establishing a spiritual bond among the Romanians. It delves into the initiators and participants of these journeys, explores the itineraries and areas visited, examines the insights these experiences provided about one another, and assesses the impact these journeys had on enhancing familiarity and connection among Romanians from different areas of Greater Romania.

### Cultural Trips and Travelers

Starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the contacts between Romanians across the provinces increased. Their travels and peregrination contributed to the growing feeling of a common belonging and culture and to the diffusion of the national ideology,<sup>12</sup> which made the great moment of 1918 possible. Although these cultural contacts and transfers had a long history, the context of the period before the Great War limited them to a small part of the population – a reality that, in Greater Romania, many considered had to change, as the expansion of these contacts to a larger part of the

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<sup>11</sup> Alexandru Istrate, “Călătoria,” [Travelling] in *Enciclopedia imaginariilor în România* [The Encyclopedia of Imaginaries in Romania], vol. III *Imaginar istoric* [Historical Imaginary], ed. Sorin Mitu (Iași: Polirom, 2020), 326.

<sup>12</sup> See Ioan Bolovan, “Transilvania pe drumul unității naționale (de la Revoluția din 1848 la Primul Război Mondial)” [Transylvania on its Way to National Unity (from the Revolution of 1848 to the First World War)], *Akademios*, 4 (2017): 88-95.

population could contribute to the strengthening of the eagerly sought-after and demanded “spiritual unification.”

“We do not know our country – and this is shameful! To accomplish the spiritual unification of our new Romania, it is essential to know our brothers from the other provinces and their lands.”<sup>13</sup>

Thus, “the need to know our country” became one of the features required in order to be a good Romanian, asserted on numerous occasions:

“To be a good Romanian implies knowing your country, understanding its needs, its aspirations, loving and embracing it in one’s daily thoughts and deeds, even if this requires a personal sacrifice...<sup>14</sup> To know your country, the resting place of your forefathers, is a duty for anyone who has a consciousness, even when its foundation is as precarious as quicksand...<sup>15</sup> To know your country, and especially the specific life of every town, even if only through reading – isn’t this a duty and a moral requirement of every citizen?”<sup>16</sup>

Among the first to embrace the mission of unifying the nation through travel – in order to become acquainted with the country and its inhabitants – were the social and cultural associations. These institutions played an important part in the modern evolution of Romanian society and facilitated a significant part of the cultural contacts amongst Romanians from all provinces before the Great War. In its aftermath, they continued to compensate for the lack of state initiative in many cultural and social domains, including by stimulating travel and trips to foster national unity. This was not unfamiliar territory to these associations; even before the war, they were involved in organizing trips in conjunction with cultural events, this placing them in alignment with the broader movement of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the

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<sup>13</sup> Roboșanu, “Cursuri de vară și excursiuni de studii la noi și în străinătate,” 53.

<sup>14</sup> Ion Simionescu, *Tinere, cunoaște-ți țara!* [To the Youth: Get to Know your Country!] (Bucharest: Editura Cartea Românească, 1938), 152.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, “Cunoaște-ți țara!” [Get to know your country!], *Mișcarea*, XIX, no. 93 (26 April 1925): 1.

<sup>16</sup> Const. Șăineanu, “« Orașe din România », de I. Simionescu” [Towns of Romania by I. Simionescu], *Dimineața*, XXII, no. 6897 (5 February 1926): 3.

20<sup>th</sup> that supported physical and outdoor activities as a mean of diminishing the negative impacts of modernization and the sense of degeneration it engendered within intellectual, artistic and scientific communities.<sup>17</sup> For example, "Astra" (*Asociațiunea pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român*), the main cultural association of the Romanians from Transylvania, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, began organizing, on its annual assembly, a trip to explore the area in which the gathering was taking place. The Association's interest in promoting knowledge of Romanian-inhabited areas is further evidenced by a proposal from one of its sections in 1913. This initiative called for "the development and publication of guidebooks of the picturesque regions inhabited by Romanians and for organizing annual trips to these areas"<sup>18</sup> – a promising initiative that was unfortunately interrupted by the outbreak of the war.

In the aftermath of the Great War and during the first decade of the interwar period, cultural and professional associations emerged as the most important initiators of trips. The goal was to increase and strengthen the cultural and professional ties of the old and new provinces of Romania. Under their patronage, various groups – including teachers, tradesmen, manufacturers, railway workers – were taken across the country, not only "to strengthen the spiritual bonds," but also to acquaint themselves with each other's professional lives. For instance, the Commerce and Industry House of Timișoara organized a trip in the main cities of Oltenia with the goal of strengthening the economic ties between Banat and Oltenia.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the Association of Christian Women of Cluj arranged a trip to Bessarabia and Bucovina, with "the beautiful and useful purpose of helping Transylvanians to know the Moldavians from the Carpathians to the Nistru."<sup>20</sup> In 1928, the railway workers from Timișoara travelled to Bucovina and Maramureș,<sup>21</sup> while their colleagues from Banat visited the main balneal resorts and the cities of Tușnad, Brașov, Sinaia, Bușteni, Azuga, with the aim of familiarizing themselves with their coworkers and the picturesque sceneries of their country.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See Roger Griffin, "Modernity, Modernism and Fascism. A 'Mazeway resynthesis,'" in *Modernism și antimodernism: noi perspective disciplinare* [Modernism and Anti-modernism: New Disciplinary Perspectives], ed. Sorin Antohi (Bucharest: Cuvântul, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> "Proces verbal" [Meeting Report], *Transylvania*, no. 4-5 (July-October 1913): 365.

<sup>19</sup> *Gazeta Transilvaniei*, LXXXV, no. 121 (9 June 1922): 3.

<sup>20</sup> "Excursiunea Reuniunii Femeilor Creștine din Cluj" [The Excursion of the Christian Women's Association of Cluj], *Viitorul*, 20, no. 5834 (5 August 1927): 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Dimineața*, XXIV, no. 6493 (6 April 1928): 2.

<sup>22</sup> "Excursiunile ceferiștilor din Banat" [The Excursion of the Railway Workers from Banat], *Adevărul*, 41, no. 13665 (9 July 1928): 3.

One leading example of organizing cultural trips in the new provinces of Romania, aimed at strengthening cultural connections between the old and new provinces, was provided by the association *Ateneul Popular Tătărași Iași*. A young association, established in 1919 with a limited scope of cultural education through theatre and cinema, it soon expanded its objectives, undertaking the mission to foster the consolidation of a cohesive national culture by organizing cultural trips into the new provinces of Romania.<sup>23</sup> Thus, from its very first years of activity, the Association coordinated pilgrimages to the nearby region of Bucovina, where participants could visit sites of great importance to the history of the Romanian nation, such as the Putna Monastery and the tomb of one of Romania's greatest heroes, Stephen the Great [Ștefan cel Mare]. By 1922, the association had already organized its third such pilgrimage to Bucovina, these trips proving to be significant occasions, during which:

"Thousands of souls came together and got to know each other. The national sentiment was awakened in some and reinforced in others. Ideas regarding the cultural, artistic and economic life were exchanged. Many came to realize that the nation is a historical reality, not merely a conceit of the mind. Spiritual bonding thrived, and the education of the people grew."<sup>24</sup>

The success of these cultural trips expanded the initiative to the other two provinces, Bessarabia and Transylvania. By the end of the first interwar decade, the Association had organized several such cultural tours, with "almost 5.000 Moldavians being lead all across the historic and picturesque provinces newly re-united with their Motherland."<sup>25</sup> All these trips were conducted under the patronage of the Cultural Foundation Prince Carol and in collaboration with other regional or local associations, such as "Miron Costin" of Roman or "Casa Națională Viitorul" of Vaslui.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For the activity of the association *Ateneul Popular Tătărași Iași* see: C. Cloșcă, "Un prestigios lăcaș de cultură: « Ateneul Popular Tătărași » (1919-1940)" [A Prestigious Cultural Venue: The 'Tătărași Popular Athenaeum' (1919-1940)], *Cercetări istorice a Muzeului de istorie a Moldovei* (1970): 317-328.

<sup>24</sup> Hug., "Pelerinajul în Bucovina" [The Pilgrimage to Bucovina], *Opinia*, VIII, no. 4545 (21 July 1922): 2.

<sup>25</sup> "Excursia Ateneului Popular „Tătărași” din Iași" [The Excursion of the 'Tătărași' Popular Athenaeum of Iași], *Universul*, XLVI, no. 161 (15 July 1928): 9.

<sup>26</sup> Corneliu Meza, "Moldovenii în Ardeal și Bucovina" [The Moldavians in Transylvania and Bucovina], *Cultura poporului*, V, no. 130 (17 October 1925): 3.

The first trip to Transylvania took place in the summer of 1924, gathering around 500 participants “among whom were 100 persons from Bessarabia, 100 persons from Bucovina, and 200 representatives of several cultural societies from all towns of Moldavia.”<sup>27</sup> These participants travelled all across the province for two weeks, visiting the most important cities and getting to know their Romanian compatriots. In the following year, the association organized another trip to Transylvania and Maramureș, and in 1928, the journey covered parts of Transylvania, Banat and Walachia. The accounts of these visits, published in the press, generally portray an atmosphere of great enthusiasm. The Moldavians were warmly received wherever they went, by both local authorities and representatives of the elites, as well as the general public.

“Our brothers from Moldavia, Bessarabia and Bucovina came to see and know us, thus strengthening the bonds of brotherly love that must exist between Romanians – between Transylvanians and their brothers from the other Romanian provinces – who came to meld their souls with ours. Transylvania welcomed them with open arms as proof that, on both sides of the Carpathians and both sides of the Prut, Romanian hearts beat as one.”<sup>28</sup>

These visits involved significant mobilization in the destination areas, with local authorities and intellectuals welcoming the visitors with open arms. Simultaneously, there was a general effort to encourage public participation, as these trips were associated with various cultural events. Organized by the visiting associations, the events provided a great opportunity for them to showcase their cultural expressions. During the trips organized by the *Ateneul* Association, a cultural soiree was held in almost every city they visited. These soirées included choral performances and conferences led by prominent intellectuals who played an active role in these tours, such as Nicolae Iorga, Ion Simionescu, Gala Galaction, C. Nedelcu, C. Stamboliu, Gheorghe Ghibănescu, V. Todicescu. Their lectures usually addressed contemporary issues, with topics such as: *How do we look after the minorities*, *Ways and means in the cultural activity of the Ateneul Popular Iași*, *The connections between Iași and the memory of the*

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<sup>27</sup> “Excursiune culturală în Ardeal” [A cultural trip in Transylvania], *Universul*, XLII, no. 152 (9 July 1924): 5.

<sup>28</sup> Septimiu Popa, “Oaspeți iubiți” [Beloved Guests], *Cultura poporului*, IV, no. 69 (20 July 1924): 1.

*great Simeon Bărnuțiu, Tradition and ideals, On the significance of the spiritual bonding strengthen by the activity of the Ateneu.*<sup>29</sup>

While newspapers generally highlighted the large attendance of the public, there were instances when visitors felt that their enthusiastic welcome was somewhat contrived. One account reflects this sentiment:

“Although grateful in our souls that the army is everywhere maintaining good standards and fulfilling its duty thoroughly, we still felt that this army, present on the streets, actually filled the voids that should have been occupied by all the Romanians and the civilians of Careii Mari, including the minorities, who, I hope, do not feel too ill-treated in our good country.”<sup>30</sup>

An explanation for this attitude lies in the significance attached to these gatherings, as their attendance reflects the level of interest for the cultural expression of the compatriots from another region. However, the public did not always respond in the expected manner, an attitude harshly criticized by the press. An example in this regard is the concert organized by the choir of Săliște during their trip to Pitești. Although a good opportunity for the people of Pitești “to hear our Transylvanian songs, admire our beautiful garments and appreciate the beauty of our girls,” the turnout was disappointing:

“In the concert hall, there was not a single priest from the town – only one from the countryside. Not even one teacher was present. The schools of the town were represented by a handful of students from a secondary course – they occupied one bench – and a few high school students – 7-8-10 in a corner. No officers were in attendance, as the two reservists in the hall, I believe, can hardly be considered representative of the officer corps. There were no magistrates, no lawyers, and no doctors. One might think that the politicians would be there, but only the prefect attended. Apart from him, none of those who proclaim their love for the spiritual unification of all Romanians at public gatherings showed their faces... One can easily surmise the impression the people of Săliște might have formed. No one spoke to them, except for the town’s

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<sup>29</sup> Meza, “Moldovenii în Ardeal și Bucovina”: 3-5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

policeman. He was the sole individual from the town, from the entire county, who exchanged a few words with 'our brothers from beyond.' This is how the people of Pitești received the Transylvanians."<sup>31</sup>

This is not an isolated example, nor is it an attitude isolated to one area of the country. The Transylvanian press occasionally expressed disappointment over the limited interest stirred by the visits organized by *Ateneul* in some of the Transylvanian towns. As one publication noted:

"We point out once again the lack of warmth with which the people of Sibiu embrace those who carry the Romanian language and culture throughout the country. It was very hurtful to see the meagre welcome extended to our guests and the half-empty hall at the cultural soiree. Our beloved Romanians were perhaps occupied in the coffeehouses, cinemas, in Dumbrava, or at the festivity (*Kertimulatság*) of the Hungarian artists. Such disappointment!"<sup>32</sup>

Highlighting these unpleasant moments serves to raise awareness and prevent the recurrence of similar episodes in the future. As one observer noted: "We are writing this so that such occurrences are never repeated. Words like 'here' and 'there' should disappear forever. We should be what we ought to be: loving and understanding brothers."<sup>33</sup> Despite these inherent situations, these cultural trips were generally appreciated for their positive moral impact, gathering participants from different social classes – teachers, magistrates, doctors, lawyers, priests, soldiers, pharmacists, engineers, students, peasants<sup>34</sup> – they were seen as a cornerstone upon which a new Romania could be built. This new Romania should firstly be "spiritually united, forming a bond of indestructible solidarity, so that it can command respect both within and beyond its borders."<sup>35</sup> These cultural encounters through travel were also

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<sup>31</sup> "Cum ne cunoaștem" [Getting to Know Each Other: How Are We Doing It], *Unirea poporului*, X, no. 30 (29 July 1928): 1.

<sup>32</sup> "Din Sibiu" [From Sibiu], *Cultura poporului*, IV, no. 72 (10 August 1924): 6.

<sup>33</sup> "Cum ne cunoaștem," 1.

<sup>34</sup> Meza, "Moldovenii în Ardeal și Bucovina," 3-5.

<sup>35</sup> C. Stamboliu, "Excursiunea de propaganda culturală a Ateneului Popular din Iași în Ardeal, Maramureș și Bucovina" [The Cultural Propaganda Trip of the Popular Athenaeum of Iași in Transylvania, Maramureș, and Bucovina], *Cultura poporului*, V, no. 124 (27 August 1925): 2.

considered healthy manifestations of the Romanian spirit, which strengthen national feeling and contribute to the unification of the national culture: "No one, since the war has undertaken such a nationally significant, profoundly useful and insightful endeavour."<sup>36</sup>

Alongside cultivating love for the country and stimulating genuine and active patriotism,<sup>37</sup> these trips were valued for their important role in counteracting the negative effects of foreign propaganda. They provided an opportunity for individuals to see and judge the realities of the country with their own eyes, rather than being misled by malevolent insinuations.

"From what they will see with their own eyes in the Old Kingdom, those from Bessarabia will no longer believe the malevolent voices who keep saying, as the Russians did before, that here lies a hell and a Turkish leisure. Those from Transylvania will see that in Bessarabia people do not kill each other, as in Turkish times, just because they are not in the grace of the rulers."<sup>38</sup> [...] "One could realise the profound transformation that has occurred in the 'Turkish pashalik' in a shorter period than the one during which the almighty Russians ruled the poor Moldavia between the Prut and Nistru rivers. 'The devil is not as black as he is painted,' a teacher from Orhei once told me. Significant work has been done here, and it has been done thoroughly."<sup>39</sup>

Often, the travel notes reflect the astonishment of those who discover that what they were told is far removed from the truth. Visiting Bessarabia in 1919 for a teachers' congress, Iuliu Maior, a teacher from Blaj, is surprised to discover the beautiful and well-constructed public institutions of Chişinău. "I haven't seen such in our country," he notes, "everywhere, there is an exemplary level of cleanliness which – once again, with no exaggeration – I've never seen anywhere else."<sup>40</sup> Admiring the Spiritual School for the future priests and the Eparchial School for girls, the traveller wonders, "How is it that we, the 'Europeans', do not

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<sup>36</sup> Simionescu, "Ateneul din Tătăraşi," 3.

<sup>37</sup> I. Ş. Cernăţianu, "Prilejuri pierdute" [Missed Opportunities], *Universul*, XLI, no. 165 (25 June 1925): 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ion Simionescu, "Excursiile" [The Excursions], *Viitorul*, 15, no. 4628 (12 August 1923): 1.

<sup>39</sup> Idem, "Ateneul din Tătăraşi," 3.

<sup>40</sup> Iuliu Maior, "Impresii din Basarabia" [Impressions from Bessarabia], *Unirea*, XXIX, no. 161 (2 August 1919): 3.



have, and have not had, these institutions, while the Russians – who are so often depicted as ‘uneducated’ and so much tainted by the Judeo-German and Hungarian press – have had them for a long time.”<sup>41</sup> Although he acknowledges the fact that the Romanian national movement faced harder opposition in Bessarabia than in Transylvanian because of the oppressing Russian rule,<sup>42</sup> the architecture and the condition of the education institutions in Chişinău, lead him to conclude that:

“Russians haven’t actually been the culturally backward people they were portrayed by the Jewish press.” Quite the contrary, as “they are a people who love art and are deeply religious, having built churches for Our Lord, as few other nations have – certainly not the Germans, and even less so, the chatty Hungarians.”<sup>43</sup>

Thus, travelling across the various regions of the country offers not only the opportunity to become acquainted with Romanians who have lived in different cultural contexts but also to recognize the similarities and understand the differences. Although the main initiators of such cultural trips were, in general, the associations, the role of travelling in exploring and embracing new areas and cultures within the country was also assumed on a personal level. Personal trips to acquaint oneself with their country and its inhabitants, were also a widespread practice:

“My belief is that the best way to know your country is to travel extensively,” one observer notes, “stopping in its towns and villages and immersing oneself, even if briefly, in their way of life. Maps and geography books, of course, have their importance, but they are silent and cold. They speak nothing to the soul.”<sup>44</sup>

With respect to the involvement of the state in stimulating cultural cohesion through travel, in the first years of the interwar period, it was mostly limited to supporting such initiatives by offering railway

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., no. 178 (24 August 1919): 3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., no. 161 (2 August 1919): 3.

<sup>44</sup> Stella Şerbănescu-Şăineanu, “Impresii de călătorie” [Travel Impressions], *Adevărul*, XXXVII, no. 12484 (26 September 1924): 1.

transport, travel tax reductions, or various financial aids. Although these aids were of great importance – as demonstrated by the fact that a cultural trip planned for the year 1926 by the *Ateneul Popular Tătărași* from Iași to Transylvania could not take place in the absence of this support – the state remained a rather passive active actor in these endeavours.

### **Getting acquainted: Places, People, Customs**

To fulfil the purpose of strengthening the bonds among Romanians, the cultural trips included in their itineraries not only the main cities of the visited region, but also places of significance for the Romanian nation and history. Among the sites that became mandatory pilgrimage destinations in Transylvania were those associated with the figure of Michael the Brave [Mihai Viteazul], whose political and military actions united the provinces of Walachia, Moldovia and Transylvania at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of such sites include the location of his glorious battles at Goroslău, or the spot near Câmpia Turzii where he was “murdered in a despicably cowardly way.” Visits to these sites included sermons and laying of garlands to honour the “sacred place that, for the last 300 years, has been telling the Romanians of Transylvania: Do not lose your hope. Mihai Viteazul may have been meanly killed, but his great vision survived.”<sup>45</sup> Pilgrimage sites also included the birthplaces or final resting places of those who fought for the Romanian nation and culture, such as the tomb of the great educator Gheorghe Lazăr in Avrig or the tomb of the influential revolutionary of 1848, Simion Bărnuțiu, in Bocșa, Maramureș. All these sites became places of reverence, inspiring both a spiritual mood and a sense of national sentiment.

“Even if someone was as emotionless as ice,” one observer noted, “they could not have missed the most moving image, when an elderly man from our group, in tears, kneeled and humbly kissed the ground that piously sheltered the bones of the great man who was no longer among us. On the way to the railway station, it seemed that the spirit of Bărnuțiu was watching over us, reminding us of the great moments from the plain of Blaj, from the inauguration of the Romanians history course at the Iași Academy, and so many other uplifting moments.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> V. Misicu, “Ateneul Popular Tătărași din Iași” [The Tătărași Popular Athenaeum of Iași], *Cultura poporului*, IV, no. 69 (20 July 1924): 3.

<sup>46</sup> Meza, “Moldovenii în Ardeal și Bucovina,” 4.

A place that inspired great devotion was the “Field of Liberty” in Blaj, where 40.000 Romanians gathered in 1848 to demand rights for the Romanian nation, “on this field where every corner of land – if it could speak would have so much to say – we think humbly of the great strides of the apostles of Romanian culture.”<sup>47</sup> Not only the “Field of Liberty”, but the entire city of Blaj, becomes a landmark destination for those visiting Transylvania in the aftermath of the Great War. Although a “modest city”, this is the citadel, “where the advocates of the national movement were made,” holding so much significance for the Romanian nation and culture. Here, one could admire the schools of Blaj, the first Romanian higher education institutions; the metropolitan cathedral, “this holy place where Simion Bărnuțiu gave his famous speech in 1848 to guide the nation”; the printing house; the library; the museum; the botanical garden; the cemetery, “this Pantheon”, where beneath its “humble crosses lie those who loved their nation deeply: Timotei Cipariu beside Alexandru Șterca-Șuluțiu, with the engraving on his cross: ‘Only death will separate me from the nation.’ Close by, one can see Nicu Moldovan, resting under a humble wooden cross. Facing the Liberty Field rests Axente Sever, the fighter of 1848. Below lies all the clergymen, who loved their nation as deeply as the former figures”<sup>48</sup>; “all these become holy relics before which we walk as if in a procession, and they grant us immense strength.”<sup>49</sup>

Near Blaj, Alba Iulia is another town with a great significance for Greater Romania. It is here that one could visit the Unification Hall and the new Orthodox Cathedral where Ferdinand and Maria were crowned as kings. For visitors to these sites, “every corner reveals a piece of the turmoil of that great day when the union with the Kingdom was proclaimed, when the dream that had grown year by year, decade by decade, century by century, in the hearts of those who felt Romanian – and were separated by the mighty Carpathians – prevailed.”<sup>50</sup> In other respects, Alba Iulia was perceived by some as a monotonous city, but one “with a beautiful, expansive coffeehouse scene, good and inexpensive restaurants, and waiters who speak Romanian. Overall, the general impression is of a quintessentially Romanian town.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> M. Alexiu, “Colindând prin Ardeal” [Traveling through Transylvania], *Opinia*, XVIII, no. 4550 (17 July 1922): 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4535 (9 July 1922): 1.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4551 (22 July 1922): 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4566 (16 August 1922): 1.

<sup>51</sup> Șerbănescu-Șăineanu, “Impresii de călătorie,” 2.

The notes from these travels reveal a general search for Romanian symbols and connections. Even an excursion into a Szekler-dominated area can be an opportunity to highlight Romanian markers. The road through Szekler land and cities, such as Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna and Miercurea Ciuc, make travellers feel like they are walking in the footsteps of the Romanian army, which stirs truly profound emotions. As one account puts it: "the white road is not just a simple Szekler road. For us, it was a path of triumph strewn with flowers and a path of agony, littered with the dead and wet with tears and rage. It is a Romanian historical road."<sup>52</sup> Thus, in every town, Romanian symbols and institutions from both the past and present, such as schools and churches, are always included in the itineraries. Alongside them, the tours usually guide the visitor through various landmarks of the area – from public institutions like townhalls, the prefect's offices, public gardens, museums, factories, quarries, and mills –, all of which offer an opportunity to experience the daily rhythm of the visited communities. These visits were meticulously prepared by local notables, eager to present their customs in the best light.

Each area offers the visitor a different experience and perspective on the culture and background of the "other", while also providing a valuable opportunity to draw comparisons between places, people and customs. For example, on a trip to Moldova, a Transylvanian teacher, Marian Sasu, attending a sermon, notices minimal differences between how the priests here and those in Transylvania conduct their services – except that "the deacon said the ektenes without the book, and holding his right hand up."<sup>53</sup> At the same time, these travel notes reveal how quickly some habits of the "other" can become a shared patrimony. On the same trip, Marian Sasu encountered practices that he "had never seen in any of our churches in Transylvania," as people – especially women attending the sermon – pass by to kiss the holy icons and then enter the altar to give the priest money for him to "mention their names in prayers."<sup>54</sup> However surprising this habit might have been for the Transylvanian traveller of those times, it is now a common practice in Romanian churches, all across the country. Some observations highlight practices deemed as positive examples that could be adopted in other parts of the county. On the same trip, Dumitru Antal meets a priest from Bacău who coordinates a youth association and has established a football

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<sup>52</sup> Constantin Kirițescu, *Drumuri pitorești în România nouă* [Picturesque Roads in New Romania] (Bucharest: Editura ziarului Universul, 1937), 20.

<sup>53</sup> Marian Sasu, "Note și impresii de călătorie III" [Travel Notes and Impressions], *Amicul Școlii*, I, no. 8 (18 June 1925): 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

team (which he describes as “a game with a big ball”), noting that this significantly contributes “to the physical and moral education – an example that should be followed by our priests in urban areas as well.”<sup>55</sup> For a visitor from the Old Kingdom in Banat, the practice of transporting children to school from long distances in wagons pulled by cars could potentially end “our system of having them lodged with various families, where they learn more bad habits than good ones.”<sup>56</sup>

One of the main issues that preoccupied public opinion and was considered a factor that hindered the true integration of Transylvania into the Romanian state, was the foreign nature of the urban areas.<sup>57</sup> This reality was also frequently observed in travel notes, with Transylvanian towns generally resembling foreign islands in a sea of Romanian villages. On the town streets, the Romanian language was barely heard. “We were leaving a town, which, despite the grace of the authorities, we did not find to be Romanian at all. Almost everywhere, one could hear only the Hungarian language,” one traveller noted, highlighting the difficulty of understanding and of being understood: “For three weeks, the time we spent in this town, we had to make ourselves understood by signs and gestures, as almost no one spoke Romanian.”<sup>58</sup> Even in situations where the state enforced the use of Romanian, such as in the public names of business or institutions, the Romanian language often seemed foreign, as these signs were mostly improper translations from Hungarian.

Some travellers found, to their great and unpleasant surprise, that even in the towns where there were larger Romanian communities, the residents – especially among the intellectuals, such as teachers, lawyers, civil servants, and sometimes even priests – often chose to speak Hungarian, rather than Romanian:

“A particularly disheartening discovery for us”, one account noted, “is the fact that in almost every town of Banat and Transylvania, our Romanian brothers, especially the intellectuals, very often choose to speak Hungarian – not only with Hungarians but also amongst themselves. They argue

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Gn. I. Chițibura, “Călătorie prin Banat” [Traveling through Banat], *Cultura poporului*, 4, no. 72 (10 August 1924): 6.

<sup>57</sup> For details see Maria Tătar-Dan, “Din «greutățile începutului». Preocupări privind «coloritul străin» al orașelor ardeleni în presa interbelică” [‘The Hardships of the Beginning’. The ‘Foreign Character’ of Transylvanian Towns in the Interwar Press], *Acta Marisiensis. Seria Historia*, IV (2022): 87-100.

<sup>58</sup> Șerbănescu-Șăineanu, “Impresii de călătorie,” 2.

that they have a better understanding of this language, and that it serves their needs very well."<sup>59</sup>

The remnants of the old regime are palpable in various other aspects as well, with some Transylvanian towns being perceived as having been designed to manifest the strength of the former Hungarian rule. An example in this regard is the town of Târgu Mureș: "The town of Târgu Mureș surprises the first-time visitor with the monumental aspect of its centre. It is a miniature metropolis. A grand promenade, featuring a central alley and extensive asphalt with sparse vegetation, is lined with imposing buildings that seem disproportionate to the town's size."<sup>60</sup> The presence of these luxurious palaces is not attributed to the good fortune of the town in having had an ambitious and enterprising mayor during the Hungarian regime. Instead, it is seen as a reflection of the policy of Budapest to bolster the Hungarian minorities of Transylvanian, and, at the same time, to showcase to the non-Hungarian populations the grandeur of its rule. Simultaneously, travellers note the competition between the old and new regime, which is vividly visible on the streets of Transylvanian towns, as the Romanian government is seeking to enforce its own symbols:

"In every corner of the grand municipal palace, one can see Romanian symbols. The old Hungarian symbols, escutcheons, paintings, and frescos have been removed and replaced with Romanians ones, without compromising the aesthetic appeal. In place of the apostolic kings, arrogant magnates, and Hungarian popular heroes, now stand our great voivodes, and especially our Transylvanian martyrs: Avram Iancu, Horea, Cloșca and Crișan... Today, Avram Iancu is the most preeminent symbol of Romanian rule in Târgu Mureș. His bronze statue rises in the centre of the promenade, depicting the hero mounted on his horse, casting a stern gaze."<sup>61</sup>

In contrast to the new Romanian symbols, the efforts of the old Hungarian regime to emphasise its power are viewed as grotesque exaggerations:

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Constantin Kirițescu, *Drumuri pitorești în România nouă*, 72-73.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 74.

"The old cultural palace, with its heavy proportions and adorned in marble, bronze, varnish, and coloured glass, resembles a lavishly dressed *parvenu* who seeks to spite her humble relatives in the village to which she returned after making a name for herself in the big city."<sup>62</sup>

The sense of foreignness in the urban areas is also experienced by Transylvanians who travel across the Carpathians. In Moldavian cities, they find that "all the main cities, like our cities back home, belong mostly to outsiders, not to us." Still, there is a distinction, in some opinions: "There, the outsiders strive to strengthen their rule, while in our case the battle is reversed: Romanians are reclaiming the cities."<sup>63</sup> However, despite this optimism, the issue of the foreign nature of Transylvanian towns persisted. Even at the end of the first decade of Greater Romania, as the nation celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Great Union, debates around the foreign nature of Transylvanian towns continued to be a preeminent topic. Nonetheless, not everyone was so critical. Some appreciated that the considerable liberty offered by the Romanian state to its minorities – to express and cultivate their own language and culture – could be a positive step towards the much-desired national unification, a unification that must also occur between Romanians and minorities. For example, a traveller to Arad in 1925, observing the Hungarian culture that is visibly present everywhere – the town is filled with announcements for performances by artists or opera singers from Budapest, paintings by Hungarian artist adorn the museums, cinemas screen Hungarian films, and the windows of bookstore are filled with Hungarian books – concluded that wherever a connection between Romanians and minorities is missing, one must be made.

"Every mutual sacrifice in this regard would not be in vain. Everyone should do everything in their power in order to achieve this, through the honest and thorough understanding of the culture and traditions of the others. Only in this way will the citizens of the same country learn to embrace and respect each other."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>63</sup> Dumitru Antal, "Prin celelalte orașe ale Moldovii. Note de călătorie" [Through the Other Cities of Moldavia: Travel Notes], *Foaia poporului*, XXXII, no. 3 (20 January 1924): 4.

<sup>64</sup> Alex Cusin, "De la granița de Vest... note de călătorie" [From the West Border... Travel Notes], *Neamul Românesc*, XX, no. 152 (8 July 1925): 1-2.

The aftermath of the Great Union of 1918 was a period of great challenges, many of which were generated by the state's politics of integrating different cultural backgrounds and populations into its own rhythm and physiognomy. Although many argued that a different approach – one more sensitive to differences and more orientated towards merging all these areas, while at the same time adapting to them – would have been more appropriate, generally, the successor states of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire adopted a centralization policy. In the long term, this approach generated results opposite to those intended. Thus, the motto presented at the International Exposition in New York, in 1939 – *'Romania has over 20 million inhabitants, all united in language, traditions and culture'*<sup>65</sup> – was more wishful thinking than a reality. Many argued that building a common culture and strengthening the nation required time and patience, conditions that could not be met in the context of the difficult 1930s. However, despite the unfinished integration and homogenization project, important steps were made in creating a common background and culture. In this process, getting acquainted and knowing each other through travels played an important part. Step by step, phrases like “on this side” and “on the other” disappeared, and trips were no longer made “to know the others”, but to “embrace our country”.

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<sup>65</sup> Irina Livezeanu, *Cultură și naționalism în România Mare* [Culture and Nationalism in Greater Romania] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1998), 9.



# Savel Rădulescu – Member of the Titulescu Team and Expert in the Optants Question<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The diplomat Savel Rădulescu (1895 – 1970) is regarded as one of Romania's financial experts during the Interwar Period and between 1944 and 1945. His present-day visibility can be attributed to his distinguished career, which included serving as Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1932 – 1936), having been a close associate of Nicolae Titulescu, and his criticism of the Soviet Union's abuses in Romania after 23 August 1944. The first objective of this research is to provide a concise biography of Savel Rădulescu, including his family background, education, professional career, skills, expertise, connections with friends and those in power, etc. Numerous archival documents contain crucial and diverse information about Rădulescu. The second and main focus of the research will be to present and analyse his role in the Romanian-Hungarian dispute over the Optants Question, closely examining his responsibilities and how he carried them out. As the author of a doctoral thesis on Romania's financial policies between 1914 and 1922, S. Rădulescu had already gained the trust of Vintilă Brătianu and Nicolae Titulescu by 1925. Rădulescu's significant contribution as a financial advisor to the Romanian Legation in London (1925 – 1928) in the matter of the optants was decisive in his employment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in October 1928, where he served as a financial and economic advisor and director of the Economic Division. Savel Rădulescu's appointments to Titulescu's team in London or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were not by chance and were due in particular to exceptional skills and abilities.

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**Keywords:** Savel Rădulescu, Hungarian Optants Question, Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicolae Titulescu

**Rezumat:** Savel Rădulescu (1895-1970) este considerat ca fiind unul dintre cei mai apreciați experți financiari ai statului român, atât în perioada interbelică, cât și între 1944 și 1945. Vizibilitatea sa în prezent este favorizată de parcursul profesional excepțional până la demnitatea de subsecretar de stat în Ministerul Afacerilor Străine (1932-1936), de colaborarea strânsă cu Nicolae Titulescu sau pentru că după 23 august 1944 a fost un critic al abuzurilor Uniunii Sovietice în România. Prima direcție de cercetare a acestui studiu are în vedere realizarea unei scurte biografii: familie, educație, parcurs profesional, aptitudini, competențe, inserție în rețele de putere etc. Menționez că există numeroase documente de arhivă, unele încă inedite, care conțin informații esențiale și diverse despre această personalitate. A doua direcție de cercetare, de altfel și cea principală, își propune prezentarea și analizarea rolului lui Savel Rădulescu în diferendul româno-maghiar în chestiunea optanților. Voi urmări îndeaproape sarcinile care i-au fost trasate și gradul de îndeplinire al acestora. Autor al unei teze de doctorat susținute în Franța despre politicile financiare ale României între 1914 și 1922, S. Rădulescu se bucura deja în 1925 de încrederea lui Vintilă Brătianu și a lui Nicolae Titulescu. Cooptarea sa ca expert în echipa angrenată în chestiunea optanților, inițial în calitate de consilier financiar la Legația României din Londra (1925-1928), a fost determinantă în angajarea în Ministerul Afacerilor Străine (octombrie 1928), cu gradul de consilier financiar și economic, îndeplinind funcția de director al Diviziunii Economice. Acest parcurs profesional nu au fost întâmplător și se datorează în special unor competențe și abilități excepționale.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Savel Rădulescu, problema optanților maghiari, Ministerul Român al Afacerilor Străine, Nicolae Titulescu

Savel Rădulescu is one of Greater Romania's most well-known diplomats in the post-1989 world. This is due to his close collaboration with Nicolae Titulescu, having been his Undersecretary of State during his mandate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as a victim of the Communist regime and to the attention he has received from historians, primarily in the works of Horia Dumitrescu.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Horia Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu* (Focșani: Editura Pallas, 2003). This work is the result of a PhD thesis. Of note are two other studies by the same author: "Vasile

From our point of view, Savel Rădulescu's life is representative of the elite of Interwar Romania's diplomatic corps. Despite the fact that he was not the scion of an old boyar family, like most diplomats trained before 1918, young Rădulescu enjoyed an excellent educational background and benefited, at least in the first years of his career, from the fact that his father, Ioan Rădulescu, had a friendship network in the Putna County and within the National Liberal Party (from now: NLP). Like other diplomats who held high-ranking positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1919 to 1948,<sup>3</sup> he began his career in other institutions and with different responsibilities. His rise was mainly connected to his collaborative relationship with Nicolae Titulescu.

His most important rank was that of Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the ministership of Titulescu, from 20 October 1932 to 28 August 1936. How do we explain the fact that he was appointed and held this position for nearly four years? Other than his excellent relationship with N. Titulescu and his loyalty towards him, what were the human and professional qualities that furthered an apparently explosive career in diplomacy? How much did the support he received from his family's friends and the local Putna County powerbrokers count for young Rădulescu's entrance into the networks of power? Given that he was not a supporter of King Carol II's or Antonescu's authoritarian regimes, could he have avoided incarceration in the Communist prisons had he not been appointed Chairman of the Romanian Commission for the Application of the Armistice in the autumn of 1944? We will attempt to answer these questions. However, our primary objective is to determine the decisive moments and factors in Savel Rădulescu's professional rise.

Our hypothesis is that his entrance into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, his circle of friends (Romanians and foreigners), subordinates and constant protectors are owed to his involvement in the Romanian-Hungarian dispute regarding the Optants Question (1922 – 1930). The need for capable economic and financial experts willing to put in hard physical and mental work contributed to his recruitment to the Titulescu team. Thus, he entered a prestigious and influential informal network which dominated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for almost two decades. Of course, the recommendations he received from certain politicians (I.G. Duca, Vintilă Brătianu, Constantin Argetoianu, and General Averescu), as well as Rădulescu's ability to ingratiate himself were equally important aspects.

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Țiroiu și Savel Rădulescu. Corespondență", *Cronica Vrancei*, III (2002): 305-315 and "Nicolae Iorga și Savel Rădulescu. Corespondență", *Cronica Vrancei*, VIII (2008): 195-201.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolae Titulescu, Mihai Ispasiu, Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, Constantin Antoniadă.

Unlike other Romanian diplomats, his life story benefits from an extensive array of primary sources and a well-researched biography by Horia Dumitrescu. Information about our subject and his family can be found in the press, in memoirs,<sup>4</sup> in letters,<sup>5</sup> and in several archival collections, inventoried and researched by Horia Dumitrescu. Dumitrescu also studied the Military Archives, the Archives of Vrancea County, the National Archives – particularly the personal Savel Rădulescu fond<sup>6</sup> within the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (from now: DAMFA) and within the Archive of the National Council for the Studying of the Securitate's Archives (shortened to ANCSSA). We have completed the data and the information in Dumitrescu's work *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu* by thoroughly researching the *Problema 11* fond in the DAMFA, where there is information on the Optants Question, Rădulescu's personal file and by painstakingly going through Rădulescu's two files at the ANCSSA.<sup>7</sup>

### **Ioan P. Rădulescu-Putna and his sons**

Savel Rădulescu was born on 19 October 1895, in Focșani, the son of Ioan P. Rădulescu, 23 years old, and of Ecaterina, 17 years old.<sup>8</sup> We do not know much about his mother; however, his father was a notable presence in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Putna County. He added the word "Putna" to his surname, a common practice given that other people with the same name were present in the public space and in the education system,<sup>9</sup> mainly Ioan P. Rădulescu-Râmnic, a politician and French language teacher at the *Unirea* High School of Focșani. This added family name was not simply an attempt to distinguish oneself but also identified him with the community he wanted to represent.

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<sup>4</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de Mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, vol. IX, part VIII (1930 – 1931), edition and index by Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest: Machiavelli, 1997); Ioan Hudiță, *Jurnal politic, 16 septembrie 1938 – 30 aprilie 1939*, [vol. 2], introduction and notes by academician Dan Berindei (București: Editura Fundației Pro, 2003); Ioan Hudiță, *Jurnal politic (13 mai – 18 august 1947)*, vol. XX, introductory study and notes by academician Dan Berindei (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> George G. Potra, *Nicolae Titulescu. Corespondență*, vol. I (1921-1931), part II (Bucharest: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> After studying the inventory of the personal fond and the text and notes of *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, we have decided to use Horia Dumitrescu's work without necessarily studying the files in Rădulescu's personal found, kept at the National Historical Archives (from now: NHA).

<sup>7</sup> Archive of the National Council for the Studying of the Securitate's Archives (from now: ANCSSA) ANCSSA, files no. I 3642 and P 6615.

<sup>8</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> For example: Professor Ioan Rădulescu-Pogoneanu or Ioan Rădulescu, a priest and teacher in Focșani.

The career of Ioan P. Rădulescu-Putna (1872 – 1934), reconstituted from various archive collections and the press, portrays an ambitious individual who attempted to climb the social ladder both for himself and for his family, as seen by the way he titled himself: “teacher and lawyer”. As a matter of fact, when Savel, his first child, was born, Ioan P. Rădulescu insisted on having the mayor of Focșani, Dimitrie Tzanu, as a witness to the baptism.<sup>10</sup> We are unsure whether Ioan P. Rădulescu was born in Focșani, although he did finish his primary schooling at the Boys’ Primary School No. 2, where his children also studied.<sup>11</sup>

Horia Dumitrescu notes that the young Rădulescu household was doing well financially, allowing them to travel to Paris every summer between 1896 and 1899. We believe that he obtained his diploma in Paris (in Law), which would also be the reason why the Rădulescu family spent three summers there. He did not have a bachelor’s degree in Letters or Foreign Languages. However, the fact that he had received a degree in France allowed him to teach French. We also have no precise data regarding Ioan P. Rădulescu-Putna’s teaching career, especially for the 1904 – 1907 timeframe, as he can be misidentified with Ioan P. Rădulescu-Râmnic.

In the autumn of 1907, during the tenure of a Liberal government, Savel Rădulescu’s father transferred from the Piatra Neamț High School to the Focșani one,<sup>12</sup> teaching French and Law.<sup>13</sup> In 1908, he was the President of the Commercial Workers’ Society of Focșani, which could mean that he was also active in commerce in addition to his work as a lawyer and a teacher. In the same year, during the tenure of a Liberal government, he was appointed inspector for secondary schools, which makes little sense given his short term as a teacher and can only be explained as a political decision.

Ioan Rădulescu pursued a public post to bring him visibility and prestige and garner political power. On 14/27 June 1910, I.P. Rădulescu, “licensed in Law, former school inspector”, was appointed prefect through a Royal Decree under the recommendation of Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Ion I.C. Brătianu, not for his home county however, but in another corner of the country, the Romanați County.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> Th. Gh. Rădvan, *Istoricul Școlii Primare de Băieți no. 2 din Focșani* (Focșani: s.n., 1931), 113, cited in Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Universul*, XXV, no. 26 (23 September 1907): 1.

<sup>13</sup> We were unable to find his name in the *Anuarul persoanelor cari au obținut titluri universitare în țară în timpul celor 40 de ani de domnie ai Majestății sale Regelui Carol I, 1866 – 1906* (Bucharest: s.n., 1906), only that of the other teacher Ioan P. Rădulescu, who graduated from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Iași in 1904, 215.

<sup>14</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 57 (15 June 1910): 2457.

On 27 November / 10 December 1910, he was transferred as Prefect of the Putna County.<sup>15</sup> The Rădulescu family's joy was short-lived. Since the Brătianu government resigned on 28 December 1910/ 10 January 1911, and, as was expected at that time, the county prefects resigned as well.<sup>16</sup>

Owing to the posts he held, Ioan P. Rădulescu, 40 years old, became a leading member of the Liberal Club of Focșani. His term as MP won for the 3<sup>rd</sup> college during the November 1912 elections, when the NLP was in the opposition, which lasted until 1914, was a significant acknowledgment. We could not accurately identify the moment when Ioan P. Rădulescu split from the Liberals. It likely occurred before 1917, when he tried creating the Labor Party in Iași.<sup>17</sup> We believe that he kept close ties with various Liberal leaders, and the split from the NLP was caused probably by local tensions.

During the May 1920 elections, Ioan P. Rădulescu ran in the Putna County for the governing People's Party alongside Duiliu Zamfirescu – then Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>18</sup> Moving to the People's Party was a winning bet: he came in second in voter count (after D. Zamfirescu), and the Party won three out of four seats. In his memoirs, Constantin Argetoianu mentions that I.P. Rădulescu became the leader of the People's Party Putna organization and stayed loyal.<sup>19</sup> He remained an MP until Parliament was dissolved in January 1922. History repeated itself when Rădulescu won another term as MP between 1926 and 1927, still running for the governing People's Party. The move from the NLP to the People's Party could only boost Rădulescu Sr. and his family's connections, as he became close to General Averescu, Constantin Argetoianu and Duiliu Zamfirescu. Among others, long before January 1923, I.P. Rădulescu also met Nicolae Titulescu.<sup>20</sup> I.P. Rădulescu died on 27 November 1934, and his wife, Ecaterina, died in 1960.<sup>21</sup>

Savel Rădulescu had two other brothers. Ioan (Jean) Rădulescu was born on 15 December 1896 and died in February 1940. Nicolae (Nicușor) Rădulescu was born on 14 August 1901. All three graduated from the *Unirea* High School of Focșani. Savel and Ioan had a similar education,

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<sup>15</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 195 (1/14 December 1910): 7937.

<sup>16</sup> Andrei Florin Sora, *Servir l'État roumain. Le corps préfectoral, 1866-1940* (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2011), 310-311.

<sup>17</sup> Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de Mâine*, vol. IX, 216.

<sup>18</sup> Ramona Miron, "Alegerile parlamentare din anul 1920 în județul Putna", *Cronica Vrancei*, XVI (2013): 94-95.

<sup>19</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii*, vol. V, part V (1918), Stelian Neagoe (ed.) (Bucharest: Machiavelli, 1995), 75.

<sup>20</sup> In a letter to Savel Rădulescu, dated 10 January 1923, N. Titulescu mentions that he had recommended his father as a lawyer for Charlotte de Wertheimstein: Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 14.

<sup>21</sup> ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 65.

separated by a year: early education in Focșani, a bachelor's degree in Law after the First World War at the University of Bucharest, a PhD in Law in Paris, though with different specializations (Economic and Financial Sciences, and Criminal Law, respectively). The university year was frozen when Romania entered World War I, and they fought on the front. According to H. Dumitrescu, Savel and Ioan arrived in Paris in November 1920,<sup>22</sup> where they enrolled in the Faculty of Law to obtain their PhDs.

Ioan (Jean) Rădulescu obtained his PhD in 1923, like his brother, with the thesis *De l'influence de l'erreur sur la responsabilité pénale*. During his time in Paris, Ioan worked for Joseph Paul-Boncour's law firm – a politician, future Prime Minister (December 1932 – January 1933)<sup>23</sup> and, among others, France's delegate to the League of Nations (from now: LoN) between 1932 and 1936 and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1932 – 1934, 1938). Despite this, Ioan chose to return to his home country and was employed as a full-time reviewer for the Legislative Council from 1 January 1926, under I.I.C. Brătianu's Liberal government. He continued ascending: in 1936, he became a permanent advisor for the 1<sup>st</sup> Section of the Legislative Council. Since the mid-1920s, Jean Rădulescu became a renowned specialist in criminology and comparative criminal law and pursued a university career. In 1926, he was appointed aggregate professor at the University of Cernăuți. Four years later, he became a tenured professor. In 1936, he succeeded in transferring to the University of Iași, where he taught until 1939, when he had to retire due to health issues. He died in February 1940, an event extensively covered in the press, especially in Iași.<sup>24</sup> Ioan Rădulescu was close friend with Traian Ionașcu and Vespasian Pella, the latter also being close to his brother Savel (both had responsibilities during the Optants Question).

Nicolae studied at the Faculty of Medicine and later became a neurologist at the Saint Pantelimon Hospital of Bucharest. Under the communist regime, he was a physician at the Dispensary No. 1 TBC of Bucharest.<sup>25</sup> He was Savel's main financial supporter after 1948. In September 1970, Nicolae Rădulescu was still alive and married.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> About this French personality, see the recent book of Matthieu Boisdron, *Joseph Paul-Boncour (1873-1972)* (Paris: Sorbonne Université Presses, 2023).

<sup>24</sup> "Înmormântarea profesorului Jean Rădulescu," *Universul*, LVII, no. 41 (12 February 1940): 6; "Moartea profesorului Jean Rădulescu dela Facultatea de Drept," *Opinia*, XXXVII, no. 9864 (9 February 1940): 2; "Comemorarea prof. Jean Rădulescu. Solemnitatea dela Facultatea de Drept," *Opinia*, XXXVII, no. 9871 (17 February 1940): 2.

<sup>25</sup> ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 24.

<sup>26</sup> We find this information in the *Deaths* newspaper column, the Rădulescu spouses thanking those who were there with them for the "loss" of Savel Rădulescu, *România Liberă*, XXVIII, no. 8051 (11 September 1970): 4.

**Savel Rădulescu: education, participation in the Great War, diplomatic career, member of the *Titulescu network***

Savel Rădulescu was initially drawn to the Army, though probably not a military career, but as a space for the physical and intellectual development of an active-duty or reserve officer, which garnered several qualities and a certain societal prestige. As such, although the Second Balkan War had ended, Savel enrolled as a volunteer soldier from 1 October 1913, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery Regiment "Cetate".<sup>27</sup> He could not do so earlier since he only reached the minimum age for enrolling as a volunteer (18 years) in October 1913. In addition, after completing the Baccalaureate exam (the autumn session), he did a reduced military service at the Reserve Officers School. He was promoted in January 1915 to the rank of Sub-Lieutenant.<sup>28</sup> In October 1914, he enrolled in the Faculty of Science of the University of Bucharest, the Mathematics section, which he did not finish, and one year later, in the Faculty of Law of the same institute.<sup>29</sup> As such, Law was not his first choice. Certainly, his knowledge of Mathematics helped him become a financial specialist.

While a second-year student of Law, Rădulescu, the reserve artillery officer, was mobilized on 15/28 August 1916. In November 1916, he was attached to the Heavy Artillery Command alongside the French Lieutenant-General Joseph Grollemund, which shows that he understood the French language well. In January 1917, he was moved to the Heavy Artillery Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Army.<sup>30</sup> Promoted to full Lieutenant in March 1917,<sup>31</sup> he fought on the front lines and, for a time, within an artillery battery commanded by his future colleague in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Constantin Teodorescu-Horezeanu (General Consul and Director of the Interpreter Service).<sup>32</sup> He was discharged in May 1918 under the rank of Lieutenant in reserve, and in 1931, he was listed in Army documents as a Major in reserve. He won several awards during the Great War: the *Commemorative Cross*, *Carpathians* and *Mărășești* cordons, *Knight in the Order of the Crown with Spades*, *Croix de Guerre avec Palme* (a French award). We do not know if he was injured during the war, though he was infected with epidemic typhus.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 9.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> ANCSSA, P 6615, 12 r.

<sup>30</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Adevărul*, L, no. 16197 (13 November 1936): 6.

<sup>33</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 12.



The war hero resumed his law studies in 1918 and obtained his bachelor's degree in 1919. The family strategically decided to send the two Rădulescu brothers to Paris for their PhD in Law, even if it required spending seemingly more than the parents' financial possibilities.<sup>34</sup> Their networking had to be supplemented with prestigious diplomas, given that the competition for administrative and university jobs had become fierce. Savel Rădulescu met Nicolae Titulescu at one of its conferences,<sup>35</sup> most likely in Paris.

Savel, like Jean, also worked during his PhD studies. We know that he worked within the Romanian Legation<sup>36</sup> from early 1923.<sup>37</sup> Most likely, he was a *supernumerary* – and unpaid – or even a non-official functionary, as this employment is not mentioned in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs status of service.<sup>38</sup> If he performed work, even without being paid, in a Romanian legation, he had to prove several intellectual, professional and communication qualities, which would have depended on trust, as well as on the recommendations of influential individuals (politicians, university professors, etc.). We believe that his father's old Liberal and People's Party relations weighed heavily, as well as the ones the young Rădulescu made for himself in Paris, especially Nicolae Titulescu. Savel Rădulescu defended his PhD thesis, titled *La politique financière de la Roumanie depuis 1914 (vol. I: 1914 – 1918; vol. II: 1918 – 1922)*, 699 pages long, and received his degree in May 1923.<sup>39</sup> The fact that he obtained his PhD title and published his work definitely benefited the Romanian state.

Savel was not hired for a permanent position at Romania's Paris legation, but he did have several responsibilities that implied representing Romania to the world. He started being selected for different work teams, the most notable one at the time being the Romanian delegation led by Nicolae Titulescu, which participated at the London Conference from 16 July to 30 August 1924, where the adoption of the Dawes Plan was discussed.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>35</sup> Savel Rădulescu, "Portret", in *In Memoriam. Nicolae Titulescu*, introductory study, selections, translations by Ion Grecescu (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1982), 223.

<sup>36</sup> Sorin Popescu, Tudor Prelipceanu, "Savel Ioan Rădulescu. Jurist și diplomat de înaltă clasă", in *Buletin de informare legislativă*, Consiliul Legislativ, no. 3 (2014): 46.

<sup>37</sup> We know this from a letter written to his father, dated 4 January 1923, where he explained why he was not returning to his home country. Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 13.

<sup>38</sup> *Stat de serviciu*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 34 v.

<sup>39</sup> <https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb311708230> (accessed on 25 August 2023)

<sup>40</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 16.

While returning for brief periods to Romania, the future diplomat was employed as a clerk sometime between 1924 and 1925 at the Blank Bank "research office".<sup>41</sup> C. Argetoianu bragged that he was the one who had recommended Savel to Aristide Blank, following I.P. Rădulescu's insinuations.<sup>42</sup> Also, due to his father's suggestions and pressure, Savel was open to a university career in Cernăuți or Iași. As such, he enrolled in the contest for Aggregate Professor of Public Finances at the Faculty of Law of the University of Iași, though he never participated.<sup>43</sup> Still, ever since he had been working on his PhD thesis in Paris, Savel has decided to pursue a career in diplomacy, allowing him to spend as much time abroad as possible.

Being noted by Nicolae Titulescu and other Romanian diplomats working in Western Capitals, his PhD thesis and Savel Rădulescu himself were noticed by Vintilă Brătianu, Minister of Finances in his brother's, Ionel I.C. Brătianu, cabinet. In a letter dated 21 December 1924, addressed to N. Titulescu, who was then plenipotentiary minister to London and Romania's permanent delegate to the LoN, Vintilă Brătianu details his team members, who he would take to negotiate with the Great Powers on treaties, reparations and war debts:

"... When I go to Paris, I will bring more companions than a Minister of Finance would wish for. However, since so many things lie in suspense and not many of them are resolved (and not always due to the Ministry of Finance, but even due to the other states or international institutions), I must also take... Given that Mr. V[ictor] Bădulescu is in Cernăuți and cannot come, I have replaced him with a young PhD graduate of Law, a student of the Political Sciences School of Paris, who defended his thesis one year ago, Mr. Savel Rădulescu. ..." <sup>44</sup>

This text hints that the Minister of Finance was unaware of the close ties between Titulescu and Savel Rădulescu. The Paris Allied

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<sup>41</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 13 r.

<sup>42</sup> Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de Mâine*, vol. IX, 216.

<sup>43</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 15-16.

<sup>44</sup> "... Voi lua cu mine la Paris mai mulți însoțitori decât un min. de Finanțe ar fi dorit. Dar cum sunt atâtea chestii în suspensie și cum nu prea sunt toate deslușite (și nu totdeauna din pricina min. de Finanțe, dar chiar și a celorlalte state sau instituții internaționale) trebuie să iau și pe .... Apoi cum d. V[ictor] Bădulescu este la Cernăuți și nu poate veni, l-am înlocuit cu un tânăr doctor în drept, elev al Șc. de Șt. Politice de la Paris, acum un an ieșit din școală și cu teza reținută, d. Savel Rădulescu. ....", Potra, Nicolae Titulescu. *Corespondență*, vol. I (1921-1931), part II, doc. no. 69, 598.

Finance Minister Peace Conference, the topic of the letter, took place between 7 and 14 January 1925 and covered the Ruhr Question and Romania and Greece's rights regarding war reparations.<sup>45</sup> V. Brătianu, N. Titulescu and S. Rădulescu were members of Romania's delegation. In the press, Savel Rădulescu is named a financial counsellor of the Ministry of Finances.<sup>46</sup>

The status of service holds no information regarding Savel Rădulescu's public posts and missions before 1 January 1926. Still, according to Mihai Iacobescu, in 1925, Rădulescu was a paid employee of Romania at Geneva (alongside George Oprescu,<sup>47</sup> D. Iancovici and D. Negulescu).<sup>48</sup> In September and October 1925, Savel Rădulescu was an official emissary at Geneva alongside N. Titulescu and V. Brătianu. He was also a member of Romania's delegation, led by N. Titulescu, who travelled between October 1925 and January 1926 (this would include visiting certain North American cities), mainly regarding the settlement of Romania's debts to the U.S.A. Savel Rădulescu is mentioned alongside V. Bădulescu as an economist of the Ministry of Finance,<sup>49</sup> but a different newspaper mentions S. Rădulescu as a lawyer, part of Romania's delegation.<sup>50</sup>

At least during 1923 – 1925, Savel Rădulescu was paid as a contract employee (*diurnist*) by the Ministry of Finances and/or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to financial benefits, he received daily pay for his frequent travels abroad (the United States mission, including the journey itself, lasted for over three months). However, the most important benefits he accrued were his experience, the trust of N. Titulescu and V. Brătianu and his entrance into diplomatic circles and networks. During 1922 – 1930, which coincides with the Optants Question, S. Rădulescu formed close bonds, including friendships, with other members of the Titulescu team: George Oprescu, Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen, Mihai Ispasiu, Dimitrie Ciotori, Grigore Gafencu.

While he was in the United States, towards the end of 1925, Savel Rădulescu's employment prospects back home for a position that would satisfy his father's ambitions looked increasingly inevitable. As such, from 1 January 1926, alongside his brother Ioan, Savel would come to

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<sup>45</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> *Neamul Românesc*, XX, no. 2 (3 January 1925): 4.

<sup>47</sup> According to the Securitate's informants, Oprescu and Rădulescu remained close between 1950 – 1960. ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 56.

<sup>48</sup> Mihai Iacobescu, *România și Societatea Națiunilor, 1919-1929* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei RSR, 1988), 131.

<sup>49</sup> *Argus*, XVI, no. 3725 (20 September 1925): 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Universul*, XLIII, no. 217 (20 September 1925): 5.

work in the Legislative Council (created in February 1925), specifically in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section as a full-time reviewer. When they mentioned his name in regard to personnel movements within the Legislative Council, the newspapers noted him as a Doctor of Law and Economic Sciences. The employment process had indeed begun before he departed for the United States. We are unaware whether he had the chance to actually work or swear the oath of office (he was not present in Romania during the precise employment time), which was mandatory for public servants. The status of service names him as an employed diplomat for the Legislative Council (an institution financially subordinate to the Ministry of Justice) from 1 January 1926 to 1 July 1928, with a base wage (*leafa de bază*) of 3,200 lei/month, though 10% of his retirement pay was held back<sup>51</sup> and the total of his earnings (including increments) was several times higher.

From 15 January 1926, Savel is noted as an employee of two institutions. Other than his work as a reviewer for the Legislative Council, he was hired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the London Legation as a financial advisor, with a fixed wage of 120 £/month.<sup>52</sup> According to the *Universul* newspaper, the exchange rate was 1 £ = 1039 Romanian lei,<sup>53</sup> though by May of the same year, 1 £ was worth more than 1.200 lei.<sup>54</sup> In anticipation of the upcoming budgetary harmonisation law of 1 June 1927, in January 1926, the vast majority of salaries for public dignitaries were made up of various increments.

The appointment to the London Legation was not done in a typical way by decree; his file does not mention any money being held back for his retirement. As such, this appointment was contractual for a fixed period, and V. Brătianu and N. Titulescu decided to employ him. This would mean that the plurality of positions law was not broken. It is possible that his employment in London was initially unknown to the central administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that it was instead an internal decision of the London Legation. Whether Savel Rădulescu ever performed labour within the Legislative Council, which did pay him, remains unanswered.

A coded telegram from Geneva, dated 9 March 1926 and found within his file (as it happens, it is the first internal document we have about Rădulescu as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) further muddles the subject of the two isochronous jobs:

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<sup>51</sup> *Stat de serviciu*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 34 v.

<sup>52</sup> According to an online inflation calculator, 120 £ in 1926 would be worth 7820.28 £ on 10 August 2023, <https://www.in2013dollars.com/uk/inflation/1926> (accessed on 23 August 2023).

<sup>53</sup> *Universul*, XLIV, no. 25 (31 January 1926): 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Universul*, XLIV, no. 108 (14 May 1926): 4.

“Confidential-Personnel

To Mister Vintilă Bratianu

I beseech you to name Savel Rădulescu as a Financial Advisor for the London Legation starting from January 15<sup>th</sup>, when he began working with us, performing real services. I need the address so that he can speak in the name of the Legation to the different British authorities I will send him to.

I dare to remind you that the wage I established with Your Excellency is one hundred and twenty British Pounds. With friendship.

Titulescu [No.] 30256”.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, when he was present in Bucharest between 19 and 30 March 1927, in addition to (once again) meeting many influential individuals – V. Brătianu, I.G. Duca, V. Slăvescu, M. Manoilescu, Princess Ileana etc. – Savel Rădulescu, joined by N. Titulescu, travelled to the Legislative Council, where he cashed in a residual pay (worth 33,850).<sup>56</sup>

Why was Savel Rădulescu worthy of being a financial counsellor for the Romanian Legation in London, given that he knew France better than the United Kingdom,<sup>57</sup> the Paris Legation’s leader was in good relations with N. Titulescu, and Savel had received a French education? Besides, in 1926, his knowledge of the English language was not as astute as his knowledge of French. In his file from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the known foreign languages column only lists French (“well”),<sup>58</sup> same for a statement he gave to Securitate officers on 25 May 1948; still, several cellmates stated that Savel taught German and English in the Communist prisons<sup>59</sup> and a note of the Detective Corps from October 22 1946 mentions that he knew English to perfection,<sup>60</sup> an opinion shared by

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<sup>55</sup> “Personal-Confidențial

Pentru Domnul Vintilă Bratianu

Rog foarte mult a trimite numirea lui Savel Rădulescu Consilier financiar la Legațiunea din Londra pe ziua de 15 Ianuarie de când lucrează cu noi aducând reale servicii. Am nevoie de adresa pentru ca să poată vorbi în numele Legațiunei la diferite autorități britanice unde îl trimet.

Îmi permit a reaminti că salariul fixat împreună cu Domnia Voastră este de Una sută două zeci Lire Sterline. Amiciții.

Titulescu [No.] 30256”

DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 1.

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 31.

<sup>57</sup> The Romanian Legation in Paris was led by Constantin Diamandy from 1924 to 1930.

<sup>58</sup> *Stat de serviciu*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, ds. R52, 34 r.

<sup>59</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 48.

<sup>60</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 119.

George G. Potra, one of the best specialists in the history of Romanian diplomacy.<sup>61</sup>

An official address dated 19 October 1928, from the Ministry of Justice to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (at the time, C. Argetoianu), which was also used as a type of certificate of seniority (from 1 January 1926 to 1 July 1928, with 10% of the base pay, 3,200 lei, withheld<sup>62</sup>) also included three payment orders, totalling 214,592 lei,<sup>63</sup> the “proper wage and ancillaries”.<sup>64</sup> Of note is that the Legislative Council’s report regarding Rădulescu’s wage was done between the leadership of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We believe that Savel Rădulescu’s two appointments were the result of agreements of governmental powerbrokers and that the Legislative Council posting was a lead-up to a future post in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as a safety net, even if the wage was almost four times smaller than his London contract. Still, Rădulescu’s tasks as a financial advisor were by no means light and, as we will see, his role in the Optants Question was significant. In addition, diplomats often had to pay various protocol expenses, not always deducted by the Romanian state.

During the summer of 1927, Savel Rădulescu received employment offers outside the diplomatic world: director at the Credit Bank and financial advisor at the Chambers of Commerce.<sup>65</sup> There were also rumours that he could become General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following N. Titulescu’s appointment as Minister. One of his and Vintilă Brătianu’s other collaborators received the post: V. Bădulescu. It seems that S. Rădulescu had another shot at becoming General Secretary – also with Titulescu’s backing – in November 1928, following the appointment of the National Peasants’ Party (from now: NPP)<sup>66</sup> government.

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<sup>61</sup> George G. Potra, *Titulescu la Londra în 1937*, published in *Lumea*, XIII, no. 9-11 (2006), and included in: Adrian Năstase, George G. Potra, *Titulescu. Ziditor de Mari Idealuri* (Bucharest: Fundația Europeană Titulescu, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised and enlarged edition, 2008), 205.

<sup>62</sup> The first gross wage as a director and financial advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs totalled 4,000 lei. In January 1930 (as a director and holding a diplomatic rank), Rădulescu received a wage of 33,900 lei, reduced due to the wage cuts of 1931 – 1933 to 22,150 lei in 1932. His monthly wage as an Undersecretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs totalled 30,400 lei. *Certificat*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 38.

<sup>63</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 13-16.

<sup>64</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 13.

<sup>65</sup> Cited in Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 32.

<sup>66</sup> Victor Slăvescu, *Note și însemnări zilnice*, vol. I, *October 1923 – 1 January 1938*, under the care of, foreword and index by Georgeta Penelea-Filitti (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), note from 11 November 1928, 50.

Savel's appointment as a clerk within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was made on 1 July 1928 (when he resigned from the Legislative Council). This time, the oath of office, mandatory for public dignitaries, was documented, dated 2 July 1928 and countersigned by Minister Titulescu (and typically performed in his presence).<sup>67</sup> He was employed as a financial and economic advisor.<sup>68</sup> The same Royal Decree fixed Savel Rădulescu as Director of the Economic Division of the Central Administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>69</sup> Obviously, this choice was the desire of Nicolae Titulescu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but Savel had already proven efficiency and good training. The double appointment did not garner any opposition within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Nicolae Titulescu's resignation as head of Romanian diplomacy on 3 August 1928 was not followed by Rădulescu's resignation as Director. Quite the contrary, on 16 October 1928, Savel Rădulescu was selected to a ministerial commission under the presidency of Constantin Derussi, responsible for solving the Optants Question,<sup>70</sup> and charged with travelling to Paris. In addition, under the NPP governments, Rădulescu kept his post as Director (from 1 June 1929, he was appointed as Economic Director within the Political Division<sup>71</sup>) and was also admitted to the diplomatic corps as a Plenipotentiary Minister 2<sup>nd</sup> Class out of the gate (from 1 January 1930).<sup>72</sup> This rank was a consecration of Savel Rădulescu's work in diplomacy and a boost to his power within the Ministry, regardless of whether the people in government were his friends. The appointment was not made following a contest, nor, as a matter of fact, were any other of Rădulescu's public offices within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among those who publicly opposed Rădulescu's, as well as other associates of Titulescu's, appointment to the diplomatic corps was *Viitorul*, the newspaper of NLP, which broached the – admittedly unlikely – idea that Savel Rădulescu could become a member of the Regency Council.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Jurământ*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 9.

<sup>68</sup> *Stat de serviciu*, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 34 v.

<sup>69</sup> *Înalt Decret Regal* no. 1668 from 16 June 1928, registered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2 July 1928, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 6.

<sup>70</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 47, 263 r., v.; file no. R52, 10-11.

<sup>71</sup> *Înalt Decret Regal* no. 1406 from 3 May 1929, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 17-18.

<sup>72</sup> *Înalt Decret Regal* no. 607, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 20.

<sup>73</sup> "Asigurări și precedente – Cu prilejul unor numiri la externe –" *Viitorul*, XXIII, no. 6641 (30 March 1930): 5.

On 10 September 1931, Nicolae Titulescu was elected President of the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the LoN Assembly. Titulescu's rising influence in the LoN also meant that various Romanian diplomats received several posts. Rădulescu was very present in several LoN commissions: in January 1932, he was elected to the Administration Council of the Pensions Fund with a three-year mandate. In March 1932, he was appointed President of the Technical Committee of the Commission for Military Spending. He was a member of the Committee of the Disarmament Conference of 1932 and President of the Budgetary Commission (1935). In addition, his position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs solidified, and he became part of several internal and international committees and of the negotiations for the non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R. He substantially influenced the Little Entente, the Balkan Entente and Romanian-Soviet negotiations.

On 21 October 1932, Savel Rădulescu became a government member as Minister Undersecretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after he was listed in 1931 – for the same office – among several cabinet proposals.<sup>74</sup> He kept this office until 28/29 August 1936, under five cabinets (two NPP and three NLP), the same as the titular Minister, his political patron, Nicolae Titulescu.

The Rădulescu family was well integrated within the local elite and political configuration for the entire Interwar Period. Savel Rădulescu kept close ties with Putna County, at least until 1946.<sup>75</sup> Especially from 1926 to 1936, when he had influence in the government, S. Rădulescu received and tried to respond to the requests for help or support of acquaintances from Putna County to be appointed or kept in various public offices.<sup>76</sup> Still, the three sons did not follow their father's example and did not add "Putna" to their "Rădulescu" surname. For the diplomat Rădulescu, this suffix would not have been of use; in fact, we are unaware of any instance in which he ever used it.

### **The Hungarian Optants Question and Savel Rădulescu's responsibilities**

From January 1926 to July 1928, Savel Rădulescu was one of the key members of the Romanian team, led by Titulescu, which was mandated to solve the Optants Question. According to the Trianon Peace Treaty (Article

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<sup>74</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de Mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, vol. IX, part VIII (1930 – 1931), edition and index by Stelian Neagoe (Bucharest: Machiavelli, 1997), 167, 214-215; Nicolae Iorga, *Memorii. Încercarea guvernării peste partide (1931 – 1932)*, vol. VI (Bucharest, s.n., 1939), note from 19 April 1931, 88.

<sup>75</sup> See: Dumitrescu, "Vasile Țiroiu și Savel Rădulescu. Corespondență".

<sup>76</sup> NHA, Fond Savel Rădulescu, file no.: 116, 127, 141, 154, 200, etc.



61),<sup>77</sup> those who resided in one of the successor states were automatically granted citizenship for the country, but could also opt for a different citizenship. The Hungarian optants were former Austro-Hungarian citizens who resided in the territories that became part of Czechoslovakia, of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and of Romania after 1918, who chose to (legally) opt for Hungarian citizenship. This decision did not always settle the issue of their real estate holdings in the successor states of which they were not citizens.

However, there was a consensus in Romania in all of its provinces, including those integrated in 1918, in favour of a large-scale land reform. This process, executed between 1918 and 1921,<sup>78</sup> was ample and bureaucratically complex. The landowners' nationality was not taken into account, and hundreds of Hungarian optants, among many other foreigners, were expropriated. Among them were several landowners with very large estates.

In Transylvania, the legal framework of the land reform was initiated during the tenure of several autonomous regional institutions (The Grand National Assembly and the Ruling Council). As such, the Decree-Law of 12 September 1919 (ratified by King Ferdinand) fully expropriated all the properties of absentee landowners in Transylvania (the future optants among them). This decree law was furthered by multiple decrees and instructions.<sup>79</sup> The imprecisions, addenda and need for Parliament to adopt a legal framework led to the 30 July 1921 *Land Reform in Transylvania, the Banat, Crișana and Maramureș Law*,<sup>80</sup> as well as an implementing regulation, adopted on 4 November 1921.<sup>81</sup> The law and its provisions differed among the historical regions (minimum expropriated acreage, exceptions).<sup>82</sup>

Unlike other expropriated large landowners – Romanians or the members of ethnic minorities in Romania – the Hungarian optants could

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<sup>77</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 136 (21 September 1920) 4725, The English text can be found at: [https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty\\_of\\_Trianon](https://www.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Trianon) (accessed on 25 August 2023).

<sup>78</sup> Several decree-laws were passed for each historical region, the first being the Old Kingdom (the decree-laws of 14 and 15 December 1918).

<sup>79</sup> The legal documents which supplemented the Decree-Law of 12 September 1919 are mentioned by Adrian Onofrei, "Legislația agrară în Transilvania în perioada interbelică (1918-1940)," *Revista Bistriței*, vol. VII (1993): 231.

<sup>80</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 93 (30 July 1921) [https://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.htm\\_act\\_text?id=65850](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm_act_text?id=65850) (accessed on 23 August 2023).

<sup>81</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 174 (4 November 1921). The regulation was modified several times, on 27 May 1922, 30 November 1922 and 1 August 1923.

<sup>82</sup> As such, absentee landowners in Transylvania who owned fewer than 50 yokes were exempted. Dumitru Șandru, *Reforma agrară din 1921 în România* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1975), 116.

not directly defend their rights. Thus, even if they recognised the new Romanian authorities, the forced land leasing to the peasants and the later expropriation were done while the landowners could not intervene. In addition, the Hungarian optants were dissatisfied with the reparation's quantum and the payment terms. Shortly after the land reform began in Transylvania (including the Banat, Maramureş and Partium), they addressed the Romanian authorities and filed complaints to the LoN to defend their rights, citing Articles 61, 63 and 250 of the Trianon Treaty of 4 June 1920. Hungary also filed complaints, citing discriminatory measures. The various structural transformations – the new borders, the citizenship issue, the construction of new nation-states, and social reforms – built up to a major international lawsuit, also associated with war reparations and the LoN.<sup>83</sup> During the Peace Conference, the Budapest government protested as early as February 1920 against the expropriation of foreign citizens.<sup>84</sup> Hungary addressed the LoN on 15 March 1923, on the Optants Question (taking into account Article 2 of the LoN Pact).

The optants and the Budapest government advocated that the Romanian land reform contravened the Treaty of Trianon and demanded the full restitution of mobile and immobile properties and the payment of certain compensations and expenses.<sup>85</sup> The plaintiffs asserted the Romanian land reform law was a liquidation measure contrary to Article 250 of the Treaty of Trianon.<sup>86</sup> Certain jurists and law specialists concurred that, as a consequence of the peace treaties, national sovereignty was not intangible, a notion opposed by the Bucharest government. The plaintiffs, the Budapest government, the lawyers and lobbyists closely collaborated during this struggle for the rights of the optants, which generated public support in the West.

At the end of 1923, separate from the complaints to the LoN, several Hungarian citizens referred the matter to the Hungarian-Romanian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal<sup>87</sup> (from now: MAT), based in Paris.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Antal Berkes, "The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands," in Peter Becker, Natasha Wheatley (eds.), *Remaking Central Europe: The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 283.

<sup>84</sup> Berkes, "The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands," 295.

<sup>85</sup> Francis Déak, "The Rumanian-Hungarian Dispute before the Council of the League of Nations," *California Law Review*, vol. 16, no. 2 (Jan. 1928): 125.

<sup>86</sup> André Proudhomme, *Rôle et pouvoir du Conseil de la Société des Nations dans le différend* (included in the file: *La réforme agraire roumaine et les ressortissants hongrois devant la Société des Nations*), *Journal du droit international*, tom 54 (1927): 849.

<sup>87</sup> According to the peace treaties, several mixed arbitration courts were created following the First World War – French-German, Romanian-Hungarian – (under the control of the

Some 389 optants addressed the MAT,<sup>89</sup> and around 350 sent petitions from December 1923 to January 1927.<sup>90</sup> This forum declared itself fit to rule in this issue in January 1927. Romania opposed its jurisdiction in the Optants Question.

The complaints lodged to the MAT garnered public attention, and multiple international law specialists were hired or offered their services to the Hungarians and/or Romanians. Romania argued that, on all the issues, including the land reform, foreign citizens were not treated differently from Romanian ones and that, regardless, this was the right of a sovereign state. As a result, it tried denying the jurisdiction of the MAT in this case. In the second half of 1927, the Romanian team tried to get as many foreign jurists as possible to write and publish studies and articles on the Optants Question, which would support Bucharest's arguments. This was done in parallel to the Hungarian campaign and involved massive efforts from the diplomats: the selection and negotiations with these jurists, as well as the occasional long discussions or attempts to correct or sweeten specific arguments, phrases or conclusions. The experts that opined on the issue in one way or another needed to be seen as independent by international institutions, journalists and the legal world.

Since Nicolae Titulescu was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs on 6 July 1927, Romania's de facto representative on the Optants Question in London became Savel Rădulescu.<sup>91</sup> The London-Bucharest correspondence kept in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive shows that Rădulescu had authority in the Optants Question over other dignitaries in London, such as Dimitrie Ciotori or Constantin Laptew.

Initially, the Romanian government focused on gaining the support of certain influential French jurists. Still, the British arena was a significant stake. It was essential to counterbalance the pro-Hungarian propaganda in the newspapers owned by Lord Rothermere (*Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*) and the International Law Association of London. At the same time, the Romanian lobby was much less present in London than in Paris and much inferior to the Hungarian one. The pro-Romanian legal opinion of certain

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LoN) which mainly covered the issue of the former enemies' assets. For a concise description, see: *Applcation des traités des paix. Traité de Trianon (4 juin 1920): Archives du tribunal arbitral mixte roumano-hongrois et autres...*, <https://francearchives.fr/fr/findingaid/32dd219dfb584388cdea98c0954f61da5e73f445> (accessed on 26 August 2023).

<sup>88</sup> This forum was created due to Article 239 of the Treaty of Trianon.

<sup>89</sup> Berkes, "The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands," 305.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>91</sup> In Paris, this post was exercised by Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen.

English university men, usually published in expert studies, could be disseminated in the media and thus reach the public at large.

Savel Rădulescu was in Geneva in September 1927, during the LoN deliberations on the Optants Question. From Geneva, he travelled to San Remo (30 September – 16 October 1927), where he had several meetings with N. Titulescu, and returned to London in October, later arriving in Paris on 15 November 1927, where he stayed for the rest of the year. In an encrypted telegram, dated 25 October 1927, Rădulescu informed Titulescu about the visits he and D. Ciotori had paid to Cambridge to meet with Alexander Pearce Higgins, an international law professor,<sup>92</sup> the consultation he had with Scotus Viator (R.W. Seton-Watson's pseudonym) and that Oxford was his next stop.<sup>93</sup> Several days later, Rădulescu informed Bucharest about the preliminary results of other talks with James Leslie Brierly, professor at the University of Cambridge and with J.E.G. Montmorency from the University of London, both specialists in international law, and mentioned other names that he held in reserve.<sup>94</sup> Higgins, Montmorency and Brierly agreed to provide legal counselling<sup>95</sup> and were each paid 200 £, on Titulescu's direct orders. Another name Rădulescu would have liked to bring to Romania's side was Thomas Barklay. In addition, he proposed other jurists outside England in his communications with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>96</sup>

After several MAT meetings, the Romanian government found a solution to block its activity by withdrawing the Romanian arbiter Constantin Antoniadă, which led to a deadlock. The LoN Council suggested that the Permanent Court of International Justice solve the issue, but Romania, through its representative (Nicolae Titulescu), firmly opposed this. In a meeting on March 18 1928, Titulescu argued that the involvement of the MAT was an unjustified interference.<sup>97</sup> For its part, Hungary tried to restart the MAT's work, asking that the LoN Council automatically replace the Romanian arbiter.<sup>98</sup> To solve the issue, the LoN Council mandated a three-person committee formed by diplomats from Chile, Japan, and the United Kingdom (Austen Chamberlain). This committee was unable to reconcile the two sides but wrote a report that

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<sup>92</sup> Future president of the Institute of International Law (1929 – 1931) and member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague.

<sup>93</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 45, 169.

<sup>94</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 45, 181 r., v.

<sup>95</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 45, 236, 268.

<sup>96</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 45, 185 r., v.

<sup>97</sup> Proudhomme, *Rôle et pouvoir du Conseil de la Société des Nations*, 851.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 851.

was read in the LoN Council meeting of 17 September 1927. This text is especially important, as it addresses the matter of the jurisdiction of this forum in inter-state conflicts.<sup>99</sup> It also concluded that the land reform was not a liquidation measure targeting the properties of Hungarian citizens in Transylvania. The LoN Council attempted to calm the dispute between Romania and Hungary several times between September 1927 – March 1928 through failed attempts to normalize Hungarian-Romanian relations and through meetings in San Remo, Opatija, and Viena.<sup>100</sup>

Up to Titulescu's resignation on 3 August 1928, Savel Rădulescu closely assisted him in the Optants Question in London, Paris and Geneva. Titulescu's resignation did not also entail his departure from the issue. Furthermore, the Liberal government acknowledged Rădulescu's expertise on the matter and appointed him to the ministerial commission for the Optants Question under the presidency of Constantin Derussi on 16 October 1928.<sup>101</sup> There is a note next to his name: "expert in the commission to solve the issue of the optants, on a mission to Paris."<sup>102</sup>

For late 1920s Europe, the issue of German war reparations was more imperative than the Optants Question. The discussions and negotiations between the Great Powers led to the Young Plan. The issue of Hungarian, Austrian and Bulgarian war reparations was also discussed internationally. As a result, a committee was formed to analyse the war reparations owed by these three countries, particularly Hungary.<sup>103</sup> In the end, it was decided that the war reparations Hungary owed would be paid into a fund destined to compensate the optants. The Hague Convention was signed on 20 January 1930,<sup>104</sup> later joined in a definitive version by the Paris Convention of 28 April 1930. Fund A<sup>105</sup> – a

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 852.

<sup>100</sup> The leader of the Hungarian delegation was Baron József Sztérényi, and the Romanian delegation was led by Constantin Langa-Răşcanu.

<sup>101</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 47, 263 r., v.; file no. R52, 10-11.

<sup>102</sup> "*expert în comisiunea soluţionării chestiunii optanţilor (fiind) în misiune la Paris*", DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 47, 263 r., v.; file no. R52, 10-11.

<sup>103</sup> Berkes, "The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands," 311.

<sup>104</sup> The Hague Accords were signed following the end of certain reunions between 3-20 January 1930 between the Great Powers who had won the First World War, other winning states and/or successor states and defeated states and covered, among others: the issue of debts, especially of Germany, certain loan guarantees, the creation of the Agrarian Fund and of Fund B.

<sup>105</sup> The money in this Fund came from: the war reparations Hungary owed to the Great Powers; annuities paid by Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (the annuities unclaimed by the former plaintiffs) and from the annual contributions of these three countries.

legal entity to compensate the Hungarian optants for losing their properties in Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia – and Fund B – for other disputes unrelated to the land reform<sup>106</sup> – were created. The money in Fund A was to come from Hungary (on account of the war reparations), France, Italy, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Japan and Portugal, and the member states of the Little Entente. Hungary was to make the payments covering 31 December 1943 - 1966.<sup>107</sup>

Savel Rădulescu fulfilled different missions up to April 1930 – officially and unofficially (as Titulescu's prime-collaborator) – in the Optants Question. Here is an incomplete list of his work:

- assisting and counselling Titulescu in his endeavours and public intercessions. Rădulescu's presence is not visible at first glance, but he worked to build Romania's official viewpoint on the economic and financial side from the ground up. Still, other than his superiors, it seems that Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen more greatly influenced Titulescu;<sup>108</sup>
- selecting and coopting certain English jurists (alongside Dimitrie Ciotori);
- communicating with other jurists and politicians outside England (for instance, with the Chilean jurist Alejandro Alvarez) – especially given that he was well-known as a close associate of Titulescu;
- he was not only on a mission for the Optants Question in London, but also in Paris and Geneva;
- as a close associate of Titulescu, many of the reports sent to him also reached Rădulescu; he often acted as Titulescu's representative in various meetings;
- alongside Petrescu-Comnen and others, he was responsible for the published works which covered the studies and legal advice of certain foreign jurists;<sup>109</sup>
- he was a member of the Commission in the Optants Question created in October 1928 (which operated as such for less than a month);

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<sup>106</sup> The Hague Accords also created the Bank for International Settlements (Banque des Règlements Internationaux).

<sup>107</sup> Berkes, "The League of Nations and the Optants' Dispute in the Hungarian Borderlands," 312.

<sup>108</sup> On this figure, I recommend the exceptional work of Adrian Vițălaru, *Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen. Diplomat* (Iași: Editura Universității din Iași „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, 2018).

<sup>109</sup> See Rădulescu's proposals to Savel regarding publishing... in English as well, and its printing, telegram from 19 December 1927, DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 45, 386-389, telegram from 30 December 1927, 390.

- he lectured on the subject. He held a conference at the Romanian Social Institute in Bucharest on 18 January 1931 – part of several lectures with other guests in Sibiu as well (on 30 March 1931).

Besides the Romanian-Hungarian dispute regarding the optants, Savel Rădulescu also had other missions and duties. He was involved in the loan and stabilisation issue and the war reparations. In Romania, he was also a member of the Commission for Studying Private Railways, a referee in a commission regarding the issue of the war debt, reparations and the complaints of French citizens<sup>110</sup> and in a separate commission regarding the Danube.

If we take a look at the locations Savel Rădulescu travelled to between 1924 and 1930, we see a large amount of work, often accompanying and assisting Nicolae Titulescu. In London, Geneva and Bucharest, Titulescu built a team of close collaborators who stayed by his side, some even after August 1936. Some of these collaborators are among the founding members of the *Nicolae Titulescu Association*.<sup>111</sup>

### A globe-trotting diplomat<sup>112</sup>

Timeframe	Country/cities	Purpose
16 July – 30 August 1924	London	The conference where the final adoption of the Dawes Plan was discussed
7-14 January 1925	Paris	The Allied Finance Minister Conference
September – October 1925	Geneva	LoN
October 1925 – January 1926	U.S.A.	Settling Romania's debt to the U.S.A.
January – November 1926	London	Legation work
24 November – 31 December 1926	Geneva	Optants?
4-16 March 1927	Geneva	Optants?
19-30 March 1927	Bucharest	
8 April– 15 May	San Remo <sup>113</sup>	Vacation – healthcare

<sup>110</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 34.

<sup>111</sup> S. Rădulescu, C. Vișoianu, Ion Christu, E. Ciuntu, M. Ispasiu or his nephew S. Nenișor etc., *Universul*, LXII, no. 156 (13 July 1945): 3.

<sup>112</sup> See: Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 18-50.

<sup>113</sup> San Remo and Saint Moritz were favourite vacation places of the Interwar Period elites, as well as for diplomatic and political meetings by Nicolae Titulescu and other European politicians and diplomats.

1927		
17 May- 7 July 1927	London	Legation work, optants
7 July- 7 September 1927	Saint Moritz	Vacation?
7-29 September 1927	Geneva	Optants
30 September- October 1927	San Remo	Vacation?
17 October- 22 October 1927	Paris	Optants
23 October- 15 November 1927	London	Optants
15 November- 31 December 1927 (?)	Paris	Optants
March 1928	Geneva	Optants
6-13 June 1929	Madrid	The minorities issues
Summer 1929	Morocco and Portugal	Member of the Romanian delegation, joining N. Titulescu from the June 1929 Madrid Conference
6-30 August 1929	The Hague	The Rhineland, the issue of war reparations (the adoption of the Young Plan)
October - November 1929	Paris	The Technical Committee for the Optants Question, the issue of reparations. <sup>114</sup>
December	Saint Moritz	Vacation
4-19 January 1930	The Hague	German and Eastern reparations, the approval of the Young Plan, and the signing of the Convention for the Optants Question
February 1930	Paris	The Young Plan - works of the Technical Committees; the Reparations Commission. <sup>115</sup>
May 1930	Paris	Signing the Convention for the Optants Question
September 1930	Geneva	The 11 <sup>th</sup> Session of the LoN Assembly - Titulescu was elected president on 10 September 1930, and ran against Apponyi and Hjalmar (withdrawn)

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<sup>114</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 60, 29.

<sup>115</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 11, file no. 60, 2.



### Savel Rădulescu's life under the dictatorships

Following his dismissal as Undersecretary of State, Rădulescu's career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was over, but he did not withdraw from public life. He was only 41 at the time and had built a large circle of acquaintances, friends, and enemies. In early 1938, the news that Rădulescu had joined the NPP was published.<sup>116</sup> He was a brief member, as the political parties were disbanded following the 10 February 1938 *coup d'état*. He had a cold relationship with King Carol II. Still, out of fear or opportunism,<sup>117</sup> like many of Titulescu's collaborators, Savel Rădulescu joined the National Renaissance Front in December 1938.<sup>118</sup>

The relations he had built in Romania and abroad, as well as his professional and intellectual training, allowed him to find other employment: he was a delegate administrator at the Mining Credit Society from November 1939 to November 1944, a post which he did not later recover due to a bad rapport with Costin Stoicescu.<sup>119</sup> He was part of the leadership committee of the *Reșița* Society until 1945.<sup>120</sup> He was also a member of the Administrative Council of the Phone Society and delegate administrator of the "Cartea Românească" Society.<sup>121</sup> In 1948, his wealth comprised a house in Bucharest (Zoe Avenue, no. 4) and seven and a half acres (*pogoane*) of land near Câmpulung Muscel.<sup>122</sup> Still, even before his arrest in 1948, multiple informants and employees of the Romanian Intelligence Service (*Siguranță*) and the Detective Corps mentioned in their notes his poor financial health and that he had borrowed money from his brother.<sup>123</sup>

The political ascension of General Ion Antonescu, his former colleague in the London Legation (a military attaché from January 1924 to July 1926), did not restore Savel Rădulescu's status. He was considered an English sympathiser and was closely watched by the *Siguranță*,<sup>124</sup> at least since early 1941, including due to the fact that he was a member of Country Club Romania.<sup>125</sup> In addition, Savel Rădulescu had met with

<sup>116</sup> *Dreptatea*, XII, no. 3038 (5 January 1938): 4.

<sup>117</sup> Ioan Hudiță wrote what Mihai Ispasiu told him, whose choice was motivated by Savel Rădulescu. We note that the National Peasants leader was not fond of Rădulescu. Hudiță, *Jurnal politic*, 16 septembrie 1938 – 30 aprilie 1939, [vol. 2], record from 19 February 1939, 241.

<sup>118</sup> *Universul*, LV, no. 355 (31 December 1938): 7.

<sup>119</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 68. According to a commissary in the Detective Corps' report from 21 December 1946, Rădulescu had seemingly returned to the Mining Credit Society up to 1946. ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 62.

<sup>120</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 68.

<sup>121</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 13 v.

<sup>122</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 12 r.

<sup>123</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 120.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, several notes from March 1943, ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 90-100.

<sup>125</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 81, 82,

King Michael I several times during the war. In 1943, the Secret Intelligence Service investigated a possible flight abroad. In 1947, the Romanian Intelligence Service, now under the Communist thumb, noted that the Antonescu regime had oppressed Rădulescu.<sup>126</sup>

Given that his name was well-known to foreign governments, that he had been part of Titulescu's team, which had negotiated a treaty with the U.S.S.R. and that he had not supported the Antonescu regime, it was to be expected that Savel Rădulescu would return to the frontlines of the political and diplomatic scene. On 31 October 1944, he was appointed a member of the Romania-United Nations Armistice Commission.<sup>127</sup> On 20 November 1944, he was even appointed president of this forum, following the resignation of Ion Christu, in a decree countersigned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Constantin Vișoianu.<sup>128</sup> All three of them had been close collaborators of N. Titulescu. We believe that this appointment is owed to Minister Constantin Vișoianu, with the King's blessing,<sup>129</sup> as well as to the future Prime Minister, General Nicolae Rădescu, a London colleague of Rădulescu, where he had been a military attaché (1926 – 1928). In October 1944, General Rădescu was the Army Chief of Staff. On 20 February 1945, Rădulescu received an additional task from Vișoianu and the King: to become a member of the Commission for the Studying of Resources and the Preparation of Documents (for the next Peace Conference).<sup>130</sup>

Savel Rădulescu resigned as head of the Romania-United Nations Armistice Commission on 10 April 1945. Documents from the CNSAS Archive and other testimonies imply that this was Savel Rădulescu's way of protesting the excessive Soviet demands, a dissent delivered to King Michael I and to Western politicians and diplomats. A Detective Corps report covering Savel Rădulescu's audience with the King after his resignation states that the former believed that "... he could not stay in an office meant to sell all of the country's goods."<sup>131</sup>

The former diplomat was arrested on 12 May 1948, under the pretext that engineer Ion Bujoiu (businessman and politician) had

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<sup>126</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 145.

<sup>127</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 43.

<sup>128</sup> *Înalt Decret Regal* no. 2216 from 21 November 1944, DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 39.

<sup>129</sup> Petre Pandrea argues – mistakenly, we believe – that Savel Rădulescu received this office following Ana Pauker's orders, Petre Pandrea, "Nicolae Titulescu, conferențiar la Berlin," in *Soarele melancoliei. Memorii*, preface by Ștefan Dimitriu, under the care of Nadia Marcu-Pandrea (Bucharest: Editura Vremea XXI, 2005), 75.

<sup>130</sup> DAMFA, Fond Problema 77, file no. R52, 45.

<sup>131</sup> "... nu putea rămâne într-un post de vânzare a tuturor bunurilor țării", ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 67.

mentioned that he was part of a subversive organization.<sup>132</sup> Bujoiu himself had noted that Rădulescu refused to join this organization.<sup>133</sup> The Securitate proceeding of 30 November 1950, on this investigation concluded that:

“Following the investigation of the mentioned RADULESCU SAVEL, it does not follow that the suspect was part of Engineer BUJOIU’s subversive organisation or that he had known of BUJOIU’s or others’ intentions to harm the Romanian State.

#### PROPOSALS

However, given that the above-mentioned RADULESCU SAVEL has previously held public office within historical governments, we propose: his internment in a prison, where he will share in the fate of other dignitaries.”<sup>134</sup>

The Securitate believed he was an informant of the Foreign Intelligence Section without concrete proof. Savel Rădulescu was arrested by the General Directorate of the Securitate and held in the Craiova, Jilava, Sighet and Ocnele Mari prisons, from which he was released on 23 June 1954,<sup>135</sup> more than six years after his arrest. The Securitate was aware of his health issues before his arrest and was admitted to several prison hospitals (Văcărești). He was condemned in 1951, following decision no. 334, to 24 months, which lapsed on 1 August 1953 and increased by 60 months.<sup>136</sup>

After his release, according to the notes of informants and the reports of Securitate officers, it seems that Rădulescu knew not to open up to others<sup>137</sup> and mostly insisted on recognising his right to retirement pay.<sup>138</sup> In addition, Securitate informants underlined that he was afraid of

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<sup>132</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 7.

<sup>133</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 18.

<sup>134</sup> “Din cercetarea dusă cu numitul RADULESCU SAVEL, nu a reușit că susnumitul ar fi făcut parte din organizația subversivă a Ing. BUJOIU sau că ar fi știut ceva despre intențiile lui BUJOIU sau ale altora, de a leza interesele Statului Român

#### PROPUNERI

Ținând însă cont de faptul că susnumitul RADULESCU SAVEL a făcut parte din fostele guverne istorice ca demnitar, propunem: internarea sa într-un penitenciar, unde să împărtășească soarta celorlalți demnitari.” ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 8-9.

<sup>135</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 49.

<sup>136</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 190.

<sup>137</sup> ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 8, 39.

<sup>138</sup> Note from March 15, 1958, ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 34, 36 v., 41.

being arrested again.<sup>139</sup> Like other dignitaries from before 1948, he had a difficult financial situation until the mid-1960s. These files imply that Savel Rădulescu, celibate for his entire life, knew how to ingratiate himself to high society women, such as Martha Bibescu, Louise Gunther – the wife of Franklin Mott Gunther, the United States ambassador to Romania.<sup>140</sup>

### Conclusions

Rădulescu was chosen by Titulescu as a close collaborator in London in 1927 and as the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1932, not just due to his workmanship, but also for his different qualities. He was physically attractive, loyal to the Titulescu family and able to communicate with others. Some valued that he had fought in the war and had been awarded by the French government. He was a constant presence up to 1947 at various receptions, dinners and meetings with diplomats (the American, English, French legations, etc.) and foreign businessmen.<sup>141</sup> He was also not forgotten by the friends and acquaintances he had made as a student or diplomat: Jean Paul-Boncour, the leader of the French legation after 1945 and a friend of Savel's from the 1920s<sup>142</sup> or Louise Gunther.

Titulescu also valued Savel's network of protectors and friends, partly owed to his father and brother. As a matter of fact, Savel Rădulescu's appointment in 1928 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was made at Nicolae Titulescu's insistences, with the support of Vintilă Brătianu and I.G. Duca, who already knew him very well.<sup>143</sup>

Savel Rădulescu was an essential component of Titulescu's team, especially during the Optants Question, but also regarding other responsibilities of the London Legation and prospects, crystallized at the peak of the Romanian-Hungarian optants dispute, namely the 1926 – 1927 timeframe. Savel Rădulescu had qualities desired by the Romanian powerbrokers of late 1925 – V. Brătianu (Minister of Finance), I.G. Duca (Minister of Foreign Affairs), N. Titulescu (leader of the Romanian team) – for new employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:<sup>144</sup> education in law, economics and finances, as well as experience in these fields.

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<sup>139</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 234-235.

<sup>140</sup> ANCSSA, file no. I 3642, 21.

<sup>141</sup> In a Securitate agent report from 8 November 1946, it is stated that S. Rădulescu and L. Gunther were having "romantic relations", ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 51.

<sup>142</sup> ANCSSA, file no. P 6615, 55.

<sup>143</sup> Dumitrescu, *Diplomatul Savel Rădulescu*, 36-37.

<sup>144</sup> See also the case of Mihai Ispasiu – another close associate of Titulescu, who had a degree in Law, but, before being named as Director of Funds and Accounting at the

We do not believe it is wrong to regard Savel Rădulescu as the *first adjutant* of Titulescu, and his involvement in the Optants Question was significant. Rădulescu had a close relationship with his former boss' widow and was a constant public defender of Titulescu after August 1936. This partisanship helped him in the 1960s, when the Communists reclaimed Titulescu, giving Savel certain material rights (his retirement pay) and some public visibility. Although Savel Rădulescu is often portrayed unfavourably in the memoirs of his contemporaries, which criticised him as a servant of Titulescu and as mediocre,<sup>145</sup> his biography portrays an intelligent character with notable diplomatic abilities and a great working capacity. In addition, the ANCSSA files do not point to his role as President of the Armistice Commission as determining his arrest, investigation and sentencing, but rather the fact that he was a former Undersecretary of State.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he had a long career within the Ministry of Finances, Andrei Florin Sora, "Mihai Ispasiu (1883-1974). Biografia unui înalt funcționar public din Ministerul Afacerilor Străine," *Litua. Studii și cercetări*, XXV (2023): 341-352.

<sup>145</sup> Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de Mâine*, vol. IX, 214-215; Hudiță, *Jurnal politic* (13 mai – 18 august 1947), note from 16 August 1947, 283.

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## Contents

COSMIN CĂTĂLIN RUSU	<i>Researching Everyday Life in the Main Urban Centres of Late Medieval Transylvania. The Model of Transylvanian Cities of German Foundation and Tradition. II. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives</i>
MIHA PREINFALK	<i>Corelations between social and national mobility in Carniola</i>
SORIN MITU	<i>Mutual Images of Romanians and Hungarians in Proverbs Collected in the Nineteenth Century</i>
CRISTIAN PLOSCARU	<i>The Institution of the Prefecture in Romania (1864–1892): Between social relations of patronage and political networks</i>
IOAN BOLOVAN, FLOAREA POP	<i>The Origins of Avram Iancu's High Brow "Heroization": Iosif Vulcan and the Journal "Familia" (1867–1872)</i>
MIRCEA-CRISTIAN GHENGHEA	<i>Journalist, spy, propagandist: about Vándory Lajos and his activity in Romania (1876–1885)</i>
LUCIAN TURCU	<i>The Interest of the Convert: Marius Theodorian-Carada and the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in the First Decades of the 20th Century</i>
JUDIT PÁL	<i>Changes in the Recruitment of Transylvanian Local Government Representatives (Lord Lieutenants and Prefects) During and After the First World War</i>
MARIA TĂTAR-DAN	<i>Culture, Travels and National Identity in Transylvania in the Aftermath of the Great War</i>
ANDREI FLORIN SORA	<i>Savel Rădulescu – Member of the Titulescu Team and Expert in the Optants Question</i>